



UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,
GENDER, ELDERLY AND CHILDREN

NATIONAL GUIDELINES ON CHILDREN'S REINTEGRATION WITH FAMILIES

MINISTRY OF HEALTH, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,
GENDER, ELDERLY AND CHILDREN
P.O BOX 573, DODOMA

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PREFACE

Among the most vulnerable children are boys and girls who are separated from their families because of poverty, neglect, deaths of one parent or both, violence, household conflicts, child labour, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, child abuse, child trafficking and dropping out of school. Such children face social exclusion and are forced to live and work alone in the streets or live in institutions, temporary homes or rehabilitation centres. The protection of separated children from the difficult circumstances they face can be reinforced by reintegrating them safely back into families which is the goal of these guidelines in Tanzania.

Children who are free from fear and violence is the moral vision of the Tanzania government as it is demonstrated in the national legal framework, building on the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Agenda, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter of the Rights and Welfare of the Child. In addition to enacting the Law of the Child Act of 2009, progress has been made in developing regulations, policies, National Plans of Action and guidelines to extend protection to children, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Tanzania is one of the countries in Africa which is transparent on the human rights situation of its children and has demonstrated its commitment towards taking initiatives in that regard.

As a measure to address the visions that will enable children to return home safely into families, the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children has opted to domesticate the set of International Guidelines developed by the Inter-agency Group on Children's Reintegration in 2016, based on the premise that there is limited guidance for safe and effective family reintegration of children in need.

It is my sincere expectation that these guidelines will provide professional and practical guidance to all MVC stakeholders including government, development partners, NGOs, schools, and communities in ensuring that children outside

the families are successfully reintegrated back into families for their optimal wellbeing.



John K. Jingu
Permanent Secretary

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The National Guideline on Children's Reintegration with families is a tool that guides the process of reintegrating children in need into their families or alternative families while promoting care and protection within the family settings. This guideline was developed with valuable inputs from partners who implement programs on care, support and protection to vulnerable children.

The Family Reintegration Guidelines subscribe to the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by UN member states in September 2015. These Guidelines will be a tool to support government, development partners, communities, NGOs and other service providers in their efforts to reintegrate children into their families based on standardized procedures for the best interest of the child

The MoHCDGEC is very grateful to UNICEF and Railway Children Africa for both technical and financial support that facilitated development and completion of this guideline. The Ministry would like to thank all stakeholders who participated in development of process.

We are particularly grateful to Ms. Ephania Mfundo the consultant who led the process for developing this guidelines.



Dr Naftali B. Ng'ondi
Commissioner for Social Welfare

ACRONYMS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDO	Community Development Officer
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CHF	Community Health Fund
COBET	Complementary Basic Education
CP	Child Protection
CPWG	Child Protection Working Group
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HES	Household Economic Strengthening
HF _s	Health facilities
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
IGA	Income Generating Activities
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LS	Legal Support
<i>MEMKWA-</i>	<i>Mpango kwa Elimu Maalum kwa Watoto waliokosa</i>
MOEVT	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
MOHCDEGC	Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, the Elderly and Children
MOHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MVC	Most Vulnerable Children
MVCC	Most Vulnerable Children Committees

NCPA-MVC	National Costed Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA-VAWVC	National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children
OVC	Orphan and other Vulnerable Children
PCDO	Principal Community Development Officer
PCS	Psychosocial Care and Support
PLWHA	Persons Living with HIV/AIDS
PMORALG	Prime Minister's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government
PO-RALG	President's Office –Regional Administration and Local Government
PSWO	Principal Social Welfare Officer
RCA	Railway Children Africa
SACCOS	Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SP	Social protection
SW	Social Welfare
SWD	Social Welfare Department
SWO	Social Welfare Officer
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAW	Violence Against Women
VEO	Village Executive Officer
VICOBA	Village Community Bank
WDC	Ward Development Committee
WEO	Ward Executive Officer

SECTION ONE

1.1 The country Context:

The total population of Tanzania as per 2012 Census was approximately 44,928,923 of which an estimated young population of between 0 to 17 years was 22,504,526, representing 50.1%¹. The Tanzania National Costed Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children (NCPA II) 2013 – 2017 establishes that the number of children who suffer multiple severe deprivations of the basic needs is high and that the scale of abuse against children, abuse, neglect and exploitation has increased over the years². There are an estimated 6.2 million Most Vulnerable Children (MVC) in Tanzania.³ The significant increase is attributed largely to population growth, especially in rural areas. These children are living without parental care or are at risk of losing such care. They include double orphans, maternal orphans, paternal orphans, children under the care of the elderly, and those cared by siblings and those involved in worst forms of child labour⁴. Other children are living in institutional care, in conflict with the law and kept detention facilities including retention homes and in the approved school and others are in prison accompanying their mothers. Roughly “12% of ‘most vulnerable children’ are separated from their siblings, which compromise these children’s physical, emotional and intellectual development”⁵.

Children are made vulnerable due to: extreme poverty including destitution, child abuse, harmful societal practices, family separation and marital malpractices, alcoholism, peer pressure, child trafficking, abandonment and neglect, natural disasters and living out of family care.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned factors, domestic and family violence is

1 URT, National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance, Dar es Salaam and Office of Chief Government Statistician President’s Office, Finance, Economy and Development Planning Zanzibar, Population Distribution by Age and Sex, September 2013, table 1.1 p. v.

2 URT, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, National Costed Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children (NCPA II) 2013 – 2017, 2012, p. 15, (includes 14 attributes of MVC in Tanzania, p. 14-15).

3 URT, Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, the National Integrated Case Management System (NICMS), October 2017, p.1.

4 SOS Children’s Villages International, Assessment Report of the Alternative Care System for Children in Tanzania, 2014. (www.sos-childrensvillages.org). The , National Costed Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children (NCPA II) 2013 – 2017, includes 14 attributes of MVC in Tanzania, p. 14-15.

5 UNICEF, The report on Children and Women in Tanzania, 2010, p. 23.

among major factors that put children at risk. Children may be direct witnesses to domestic violence, often seeing abusive incidents or hearing violence as it happens in their homes and families. Child exposure to domestic violence is associated with other forms of child maltreatment. As witnesses, children and adolescents are considered secondary victims of domestic violence and can be harmed psychologically and emotionally, and are more likely to be abused. As a result, most of the children affected by domestic violence end up living on the streets, temporary children homes, in foster homes, in juvenile retention homes, approved school and others are engaged in child labour.

The Government of Tanzania has over the years demonstrated its commitment to the protection of children including through the ratification of the UN and Africa Union Conventions and enacting local laws such as: The Penal Code [Cap. 16 R.E 2002], the Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act and the Law of the Child Act that were passed in 2008 and 2009 respectively. The Violence Against Children (VAC) survey launched in Tanzania in 2011 provided clear recommendations including the need to establish a stronger foundation for both prevention and responses within a nationally supported Child Protection System in line with the Law of the Child Act of 2009 and its regulations.

The Family Reintegration Guidelines subscribe to the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by UN member states in September 2015. These Guidelines will be a tool to support government, development partners, communities, NGOs and other service providers in their efforts to reintegrate children into their families based on standardized procedures for the best interest of the child.

The Family Reintegration Guideline is to be used alongside other guiding documents developed by the government to provide guidance on different MVC the Household Economic Strengthening Guidelines, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, Psychosocial Care and Support Guidelines, MVC Identification Tools and Child Protection Regulation and Guidelines.

1.2 Definition of Terms:

“Child”: Any person below the age of eighteen years⁶

“Family” - means parental father, mother and children, adopted or blood related and other close relatives including grandfather, grandmother, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, and nieces who live in a household ⁷

“Children’s Reintegration” –The process of a child without parental care making what is anticipated to be a permanent transition back into his or her biological family or, *where this is not possible* to another form of family based care and community (usually of origin), in order to receive protection and care and to find a sense of belonging and purpose in all spheres of life⁸. This does not encompass adoption processes.

“Fit Person”: a person of full age who is of high moral character and integrity and of sound mind who is not a relative of the child and capable of looking after a child, and has been approved by a social welfare officer as being able to provide a caring home for a child;⁹

“Guardian”: a person who has a charge or control over a child or a person appointed by deed, will or order of the court vested with the duty of taking care and managing the property and rights of the child;¹⁰

“Family Reunification”: is the process of bringing together the child and family or previous care-provider for the purpose of establishing or re-establishing long-term care¹¹. It is a right and refers only to the physical return of the child to his/her family, for example in the cases of extreme poverty, separation, sexual abuse,

6 *Law of the Child, 2009, Section 4(1) states that a person below the age of eighteen years shall be known as a child. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 1 states that ‘a ‘child ‘ as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger.*

7 *Law of the Child 2009 Section 7.-(1) States that: “A child shall be entitled to live with his parents or guardians”. Article 9 in the CRC refers to the right of the child not to be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities determine, according to the law, that such separation is in the best interests of the child.*

8 *Inter-Agency Group on children’s Reintegration, Guidelines on Children’s Reintegration, designed by Chasqui Design & Communications, 2016, p.1.*

9 *Law of the Child, 2009 Sec.*

10 *Ibid Part 1, Sec. 3*

11 *International Committee of the Red Cross, Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, 2004, p.37.*

refugee children, asylum seekers and migrants¹².

“Most Vulnerable Children (MVCs)”: those under the age of 18 years falling under extreme conditions characterized by severe deprivation as to endanger their health, well-being and long-term development. ¹³

“Home”: means, in respect of the child, a place where in the opinion of authorities is the child’s parent or guardian permanent known residence, and where the authorities cannot determine the home of any such person, he/she shall be deemed to have his home in the area of jurisdiction of the local authority in whose area the child is found;¹⁴

“Institution”: means an approved residential home, retention home, approved schools or institution for socially deprived children and street connected children and includes a person or institution that has to care and control the children;¹⁵

“Child Abuse”: contravention of the rights of the child which causes physical, moral or emotional harm including beatings, insults, discrimination, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitative labour;¹⁶

“Social Welfare Officer” means a social welfare officer in the service of the Government;¹⁷

“Social Workers” are trained personnel who use their knowledge and skills to provide social services for clients - individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations, or society in general.¹⁸

“Parent”: A biological father or mother, the adoptive father or mother and any

12 *Inter-Agency Group on children’s Reintegration, Guidelines on Children’s Reintegration, designed by Chasqui Design & Communications, 2016., p.27, and UNICEF, Advocacy Brief, the Right of the Child to Family Reunification, May, 2016, p.2.*

13 *URT, NCAP for Most Vulnerable Children, 2013 -2017 p. 14.*

14 *Law of the Child Act, 2009, Part 1 Sec.3.*

15 *Ibid*

16 *Ibid*

17 *Ibid*

18 *URT, Assessment of Social Welfare Force in Tanzania, Department of Social Welfare, 2012 (Definition Adopted from the American National Association of Social Workers) p. ix.*

other person under whose care a child has been committed.¹⁹

“Confidentiality”: Means keeping a client’s information between the professional and the child, and not telling others including co-workers, friends, own family members. It is one of the responsibilities of social welfare officers and social workers to clients to protect personal information. Information is revealed to stakeholders with care in the process without doing harm to the child and in its best interest²⁰.

“Case Worker” - a social worker who is engaged by a government agency, non-profit organization, or another group to take on the cases of individuals and provide them with advocacy, information or other services.²¹

“Care Giver”- is any person giving care to a child in the home environment. A primary care giver is the main person who lives with the child and provides regular parenting care and often includes family members, foster parents, legal guardians, siblings, uncles, aunts, grandparents or close family relatives. Secondary care givers include community members and professionals.²²

“Rehabilitation Services” are efforts to improve the mobility of children with physical disabilities and to help recover from long-term health problems such as mental or psychological or medical conditions alongside other ailments before they return.²³

“Temporary Alternative Care” - is part of the transitory temporary care that are accompanied by ongoing monitoring, support and reassessment in the process of finding a permanent placement for the child such as foster care or supervised independent living and ultimately if reintegration is ruled out a child is placed in

19 *The Law of Child Act 2009, Part 1 Sec. 3*

20 <http://www.socialworker.com> and reiterated in URT, Assessment of the Social Welfare Workforce in Tanzania, Final Report, June 2012, p. 71

21 Wikipedia 12/7/2018. *Casework in the Tanzanian context must take sufficient cognizance of the social and economic reality of the situation in Tanzania, for instance, the culture, poverty levels and squalid conditions as explained by Christopher Chitereka, Social Work Practice in a Developing Continent: The Case of Africa P. 153. (<https://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/advancesinsocialwork/>)*

22 URT, *National Costed Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children (NCPA II 2013 – 2017) p.5.*

23 *Inter-agency group on children’s reintegration, Guidelines on Children’s Reintegration, 2016, pgs. 13 and 23.*

a new permanent family through adoption²⁴

“Case Management” - is the process of helping individual children and families through direct social-work type support, and information management.²⁵ It ensures that clear and comprehensive procedures and protocols are in place and being utilized for the management of cases of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation on a multi-agency basis to promote quality, cost-effective outcomes.²⁶ *N.B case management include personal information that belongs to the child and parent/caregiver. It is often very sensitive. As a result, there are some specific, important, case management principles that govern information management*

”Para-Social Worker“: unpaid assistant who has been trained to assist in the delivery of foundational social welfare services at community level. He/she offers psycho-social support and primarily refers clients to needed services within the community. Also referred to as para social workers.²⁷

“Social Workers” are trained personnel who use their knowledge and skills to provide social services for clients -individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations, or society in general.²⁸

“Crisis Centre” - A centre staffed especially by volunteers who give support and advice to people experiencing personal crises.²⁹

1.3 Rationale:

Children living outside family care lack proper parental upbringing and may face severe threats of poverty, limited access to education, encounter poor family

24 *Ibid*, p. 13, 14, 19 and 39.

25 Inter-Agency Guidelines For Case Management & Child Protection, 2014, p.6 (<http://www.cpcnetwork.org/>).

26 URT, *The National Costed Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children, 2013 – 2017*, p. 8.

27 URT, *Assessment of Social Welfare Force in Tanzania, Department of Social Welfare, 2012*, p. ix.

28 *Ibid* p. ix (Definition Adopted from the American National Association of Social Workers).

29 <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/crisis+center>. (Children in crisis include those in any situation of sudden loss of ability to cop. A number of events or circumstances can be considered a crisis: for example life-threatening situations, such as lack of food, natural disasters, child abuse including sexual assault or other criminal victimization; medical illness; mental illness; thoughts of suicide or homicide; and loss or drastic changes in relationships like death of parent(s) and changes in family relationships due to divorce.)

Read more: <http://www.minddisorders.com/Br-Del/Crisis-intervention.html#ixzz5RXN2ZFY5>

relations, society's poor attitude, difficulties and temptations of street life and culture. In addition, they are at risk of falling victims to violence and exploitation, hence the paramount need to safeguard them while facilitating the sense of urgency, that children are able to participate in the process, make choices and decisions to influence events, and to have an impact on their own lives. There is a direct link between child protection and good governance and the government is primarily responsible for addressing this crisis where thousands of girls and boys are separated from their families, engaged in exploitative child labour or living on the streets, neglected or abused within and outside families, or poorly cared for in institutions.

Violence, abuse and exploitation faced by these children is on the rise, yet incidents are rarely reported³⁰. Such violation of child rights remains largely unnoticed and undocumented due to the perceptions about the child, societal practices; moral decay and weak law enforcement at the community level.

Street connected children in Tanzania are among those separated from their families – (partially or fully). Headcount report from the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Children and Elderly in 2017 revealed that during the day there were 6,393 CLWS aged 0–18, of which 4,865 were male, who were counted in the six cities of Mwanza, Dar-es-Salaam, Arusha, Mbeya, Dodoma and Iringa.

Furthermore, Mapping Study Report of Social Welfare Services and Providers in Tanzania of 2015 reported that social welfare system is based on case work management and is institutional based without the adequate standardised tools to guide them. The study reported that there were six retention homes, one approved school and 282 children's homes, however, these institutions' systems are not pro-active and hence has proved to be inefficient while trying to respond to an existing social ill and child vulnerability. In addition, those homes that are essential in providing temporary shelter for vulnerable children prior to permanent family reintegration have major challenges concerning operating as stand-alone entities

30 UNICEF, *Protecting Children from Violence: A Comprehensive Evaluation of UNICEF's Strategies and Programme Performance, Tanzania Country Case Study, 2014*, (Reference is made to the National Study on Violence against Children of 2011, p. 5 which indicated that sexual, physical and emotional violence are common for children growing up in Tanzania, and the perpetrators of this violence are often near and known to the children).

without connection to communities and lack of care plans which result into children remaining in the children's homes for long periods and growing into adulthood without having accessed parenting in their families.³¹ As the number of children living outside families is increasing, the necessity to address and protect the needs of this group increases too.

These guidelines are unique and based on the understanding that a child's reintegration requires much more than simply returning a child to their family of origin or placing them within their kinship network³². The National Child Reintegration Guidelines will form the best model as they are moulded taking into consideration local conditions, broader consideration of gender equality and other social circumstances and localising principles established in the International Interagency Children Reintegration Guidelines, UN international guidelines on alternative care and professional social work and community development practices in the country. The Child Reintegration Guidelines demonstrate that greater investment in child protection is needed by providing guidance that is relevant to supporting children, communities and families to prevent unnecessary separation.

Child Reintegration Guidelines are necessary to address the process of reintegration of children separated from their families and living and working on their own on the streets in urban and sub urban areas, others work in mines, farms, in quarries, live in institutions, temporary homes, rehabilitation centres and crisis centres. These guidelines will be used as a standardised tool to strengthen child protection modalities, guide groups of practitioners in planning and executing effective family reintegration activities that respond to the needs of children out of family care in different contexts in order to achieve the intended outcome for the welfare and best interest of the child.

1.4 Intended Users of these Guidelines:

The guidelines are primarily for individuals working with public departments, private organisations and programmes that work with children. The guidelines

31 URT, *Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Mapping Study Report for Social Welfare Services and Providers, August 2015, p. 11.*

32 *Global Social Service Alliance in <http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/guidelines-childrens-reintegration> a review of the Inter-Agency Guidelines on Children's Reintegration, 2016.*

will be of particular relevance to individual professionals who are involved in the reintegration process.

The guidelines serve as a tool for improvement of reintegration services and shall be used by:

- Regional and local government and relevant authorities
- Social welfare officers and social workers
- Community development officers
- Community service providers
- Community volunteers
- Stakeholders or implementing partners working with MVC programs at all levels, Private and Public managers/owners of Children's homes
- Community members
- Law enforcers particularly Police force and Prison service where the need may arise,
- Medical practitioners.

SECTION TWO

2.0 OBJECTIVES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This section outlines the objectives and fundamental principles to be adhered to during children reintegration process.

2.1 Broad Objective

The main objective of the family reintegration guidelines is to guide the process of reintegrating children in need into their families or alternative families where it is not possible for them to remain in their original families while promoting care and protection within the family settings in Tanzania

2.2 Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of these guidelines include:

- To promote child protection intervention in Tanzania through family reintegration services
- To provide guidance to Social Welfare Officers/Social Workers and Child Protection Programme Managers on the processes and procedures for effective reintegration of children into their families,
- To ensure that children, families, and communities who are involved in reintegration are adequately provided with quality care, including psychosocial support and other protection services.
- To protect the best interest of the child.
- To ensure effective collaboration of service providers that empower families, including communities and institutions like schools, law enforcement, household economic strengthening systems, health and other related stakeholders in making reintegration of children a success.

2.3 Guiding Principles

All actors implementing family reintegration interventions have the responsibility to adhere to the following principles:

2.3.1 Prioritization of the Family

Social Welfare Officers /Social Workers must appreciate that a family is the best place for children's survival, upbringing and development as acknowledged in

international law, including the UN-CRC of 1989 and in the ACRWC and the law of the child Act No. 21 of 2009. It is also established in preamble of the ACRWC that it is recognised that: *“the child occupies a unique and privileged position in the African society and that for the full and harmonious development of his personality. The child should grow up in a family environment in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.”*³³ In addition, the Tanzania Population policy of 2006 subscribes to the principle that the family is the basic unit of society and, as such, it should be strengthened; it is also entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support.³⁴

2.3.2 Consideration of the wider Child Protection System

Safe and effective support for reintegration must be embedded within broader systems of child protection at the different levels of government. **Professional Skills required** by the front line Social Welfare Officers/Social Workers adhere the following values:

- Acknowledging diversities based on age, gender, reasons for separation, experiences during separation and the family’s current situation and act in a culturally well-informed way,
- Recognising fears, strengths and concerns that children and families have
- Recognising the level of abuse and violence that a child has experienced
- Stimulating the community’s responsibility for the returning child through recognising and building on children and community strengths by identifying their human and other resources
- Encouraging children to voice their concerns and reassuring them of their ability to make decisions and build a greater sense of power and control over their lives

2.3.3 Human Rights Based Approach

Family reintegration process should follow the UN’s and Africa Union conceptual framework for child rights programming and apply the fundamental human rights principles of participation, non-discrimination, equality based on gender, ethnicity religion and disability, accountability and respect for children’s voices across all levels of the process

33 Africa Union, *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*, (<http://www.achpr.org/instruments/child/>).

34 URT, *Ministry of Planning, Economy and Empowerment, National Population Policy, 2006, p.1.*

2.3.4 Good Governance:

Regional and Local Government Authorities should make sure that Social Welfare Officer/Social Worker adhere to the basic tenants of the good governance namely transparency, responsibility, accountability, participation and responsiveness to the needs of the people. Good governance and support for proper family reintegration should include adequate resource allocations and fiscal management, work with individual children and families and other services, while collaborating with different actors and other systems such as education, social protection, justice, economic strengthening, law enforcement, para-professional systems, and health and community groups' systems.

2.3.5 Best Interest of the Child

Social welfare officers/social workers must observe the Law of the child Act No.21 of 2009 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) that consider the best interest of a child as the primary consideration in all actions concerning a child whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts or Administrative Bodies. The guidelines are intended to improve the reintegration of all groups of separated children in non-emergency and even emergency settings. It is essential to recognise that for some children, returning to their families may not be in their best interests and that in some cases children should be placed in alternative care, adoption or supervised independent living depending on the age and the required environment.

2.3.6 Do no Harm to the Child

Doing no harm essentially means that interventions by Social Workers and Social Welfare Officers do not undermine the survival, development and welfare of the children by exacerbating rather than mitigating the conditions that put children at risk in the institutions and in their families. Do no harm is linked to the principles of “best interest of the child” and “no discrimination” as the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children underline the fact that decisions, should be made on a case-by-case basis, with a view, to ensuring the child’s safety and security, grounded in the best interests and rights of the child, in conformity with the principle of non-discrimination and taking due account of the gender perspective.³⁵ Reuniting children with their families must be done in a way that

³⁵ UN, *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, the report of the Third Committee (A/64/434)* 64/142 Article 6.

does not cause further harm. In practice this means ensuring that children are made aware of their rights.

2.3.7 Child Participation in Making Decisions

The right is established in the Law of the Child Act NA 21/2009 Section 11 where it is stated that:

‘a child shall have a right of opinion and no person shall deprive a child capable of forming views the right to express an opinion, to be listened to and to participate in decisions which affect his well-being’. Therefore, the decision to reintegrate a child to their families must consider the views and the opinions of the child depending on the age and capacity.

2.3.8 Informed Consent Process with Minors who can make Decisions

Children, families and communities require adequate information to allow them make informed decisions. The process includes but not limited to explanation of the reintegration process, description of expected benefits and potential risks, explanation of confidentiality and description of available services e.g. education and health. Concurrently, a balance has to be maintained by observing confidentiality in protecting the rights of the child in case such evidence is used against the child to intensify the stigma, discrimination and differential treatment.

2.3.9 Confidentiality:

Social Welfare Officer/Social Worker and agencies are required to respect the privacy of the children and families by taking responsible care of information obtained during the professional activities of reintegrating the child, however under special circumstances the information can be disclosed and shared with relevant authorities or professionals if there is a risk of significant harm to the child. This disclosure should be done based on the best interest of the child

SECTION THREE

3.0 CASEWORK AND THE REINTEGRATION PROCESS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section explains how a case of individual child who has been separated from his or her family is managed from assessing him or her as an individual, his or her family and community members and situation analysis with an aim of meeting his/her human rights, basic needs and enhance social and economic functioning as a person with dignity. Case work in the reintegration process is an approach used by social welfare/social work cadres to ensure the provision of appropriate and effective multi-sectoral support services for children separated from their families.³⁶ Case work is not gender neutral, which means, gender analysis will, in addition, form part of process.

This section recognises that casework and the reintegration process involves various stakeholders and their roles at each stage. It encompasses the different stages in the family reintegration process in a step by step mode. Time-frame for each step must be set during the case planning stage and after assessing the facts i.e. days, weeks and months while considering reasonable time which is within annual budget cycle, does not taint the image of the social work profession and rights of the child.

3.2 MAPPING THE ROLES PLAYED BY DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CHILD REINTEGRATION PROCESS

Mapping and coordinating reintegration and related services is important for effective collaboration of the range of stakeholders who could be involved in the reintegration process including children themselves, the Regional and Local Government Authorities, law enforcers, families, communities, education and health sectors, the media, non-governmental organisations, faith based organisations and the private sector. It is also essential to identify roles, gaps and strengths of the different stakeholders.

³⁶ Definition adopted from URT, Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Children and Elderly, National Integrated Case Management System, October 2017, p. 2.

The following are the stakeholders and their respective roles:

- **Children** are at the centre of the reintegration process. It is imperative that individual children are supported in identifying the root causes of separation, their strengths, needs and their determinants are considered. Children can provide support to one another and promote positive changes and greater investment in reintegration. As per Law of the Child Act, Section 11, children have a right of opinion and the right to express an opinion, to be listened to and to participate in decisions which affect their well-being. Therefore the need for them to be consulted in every step of the reintegration process. This will support their settling down and readjusting back to family situation. It is imperative to note however that children display a high degree of diversity and individual uniqueness, which means interventions need to take into consideration of such characteristics.
- **Families** have the primary duty of child care. Potential return of a child to the care of their parents or guardians involves family members' active engagement. The law of the Child Act, 2009 Sections 7 & 8 establish that a child shall be entitled to live with his parents or guardians whose duty is to maintain that child and that duty, gives the child the right to food, shelter and clothing. It is vital that siblings and extended families cooperate in the reintegration processes. Case workers should seek to explore the social economic characteristics of the families where the separated children originate from, and build on strengths within those families, identifying and reinforcing positive attitudes and behaviours. Intensive work with families attempt to address the causes of separation and improve the quality of relationships with family members.
- **Government** at the national level, i.e. key ministries and departments in charge of children are responsible for protecting, promoting and fulfilling children's rights and have the ultimate and primary duty of ensuring that reintegration is safe and effective through laws and policies, service provision, and adequate budgeting and staffing. Such ministries ensure professional standards are maintained and relevant cases are referred to the judiciary whose decisions are important in the reintegration of some selected groups of children. The government is also responsible for monitoring and evaluating coordination.

- o **At the Regional Level** government should ensure that gatekeeping and coordination of reintegration process is done accordingly.
- o **Local Government Authorities (LGAs)** should take preventive measures concerning children detached from families by ensuring there are no children that are living and working on the streets in their area of jurisdiction while recognising such children require care, protection and necessary services. They should ensure children become part of the development agenda plus budget allocation for their related matters. It is established in the Law of the Child Act, Sec. 94 (2) that the Social Welfare Officer in the Local Government shall exercise his functions in relation to the welfare of the child by *safeguarding children and promote conciliation between parents and a child*. The law further states that “*Social Welfare Officer may be assisted by such officers of the local government authority as the authority may determine*”.³⁷
- o **Ward Level** should ensure all issues of children in their areas are discussed in WDC meetings including children that are reunified with their families. They should also provide support to families of reintegrated children to ensure they are protected and remain at home.
- o **Village/Mtaa Level Leaders** are responsible to follow up on progress of the reunified children in their areas and ensure their safety and that such children do not go back to extreme vulnerability.

*It is vital to recognise that, **Local Government Authorities** are in charge of the management and administration of Social Welfare services at regional and council levels. Social welfare services are provided by the Social Welfare Officers in the Councils or by non-governmental organisations, both under the supervision and coordination of the Head of the Social Welfare unit of the Council. The local government authorities from the village/*mtaa* level are among key stakeholders in the implementation of the children reintegration process. They participate in a range of activities including identification of children’s families, targeting and selection of beneficiaries required for particular social services and social protection; sensitization, awareness raising and community mobilizations; managing grievances; coordination; monitoring and reporting. According to the National Policy Guide for the Provision of Services to MVCs in Local*

37 URT, Law of the Child Act, 2009, Section 94 (2).

Government Authorities by the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government, one of the roles of the district councils is to provide technical support and facilitate the implementation of the MVC care and support interventions. The Local Government Act No. 7 of 1982 requires the LGAs to co-ordinate the implementation of MVC Plans in their areas of jurisdiction.

At the Local Government Authority level, the protection of reintegrated children will be coordinated through women and children protection committees at district, ward and village/*mtaa* levels. Community development Officers are part of the Local Government structure and responsible for community development plans which means they are also important stakeholders in integrating family or household needs in the village/*mtaa* development plans. It is expected that social welfare officers and social workers will ensure reintegrated children are identified in the government structure and for budget purposes as most vulnerable children by the Local Government Councils at the district, Ward and Village/*Mtaa* levels.

- **Law Enforcers** come into contact with children as child victims of crime and/or witnesses. They should take measures in seeking professional support that promote physical and psychological recovery and family reintegration of a child victim of any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse and separation from family.
- **Communities and Religious Leaders;** Communities – including faith-based groups play a key role in reducing the stigma and discrimination that affect many reintegrated children, and in protecting them from further abuse, neglect and exploitation. However, effective engagement may require social change, as existing norms may perpetuate stigma, discrimination and child maltreatment. Religious and secular leaders, as well as community-based child protection mechanisms, could play significant roles given the right levels of support. Community and religious leaders in addition, have a role in promoting alternative family based care for children without parental or near relative care, e.g. to encourage foster care and adoption of vulnerable children.
- **Social Service Providers including Skills-Training, Schools, Health Care and Social Protection Facilities:** Tanzania had made commitment to implement Education for All (EFA) goals and targets including access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality

to children in difficult circumstances.³⁸ Tanzania's 2014 Education and Training Policy has gone a step further and aims to increase access to primary and secondary education, and to improve the quality of education. These goals are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a United Nations initiative which sets a target for all countries to offer all children free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education by 2030.

Enrolling children who are in the process of being reintegrated into their families in primary schools is easier compared to higher levels of education. It includes making use of contextualized learning system for older children who dropped out of primary schools that covers basic reading, writing and counting/ arithmetic skills - known as Complementary Basic Education (COBET) or popularly *MEMKWA* in Swahili. Special education for children with disabilities implements the model of inclusive education which is essential in mainstreaming human rights in the education system.

Resuming or readmission into the education and vocational training system is key in the reintegration process. The stakeholders could advocate for positive changes in the form of exceptions to be outlined in the education policy when it comes to re-enrolling reintegrated children into schools. Where readmission has been secured, teaching staff and fellow pupils/students could play a vital role in follow-up and ensuring new learners feel accepted.

Ensuring provision of psychosocial support, health and medical services to reintegrated children is critical in reducing vulnerability and exclusion. Families that require support because of poverty need to be identified and linked to social protection mechanisms provided under the auspices of traditional groups, the government, development partners, charitable religious and faith based organisations in facilitating access to ways of strengthening their economic situations and alleviate poverty. One of the effective social protection mechanism is the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), which reaches out to poor families living under the basic need poverty line through cash transfers. TASAF support targets the poor and vulnerable households as well as those temporarily affected by short-term shocks.

38 URT, "Education for All 2015 National Review Report: United Republic of Tanzania Mainland, prepared for UNESCO World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19-22 May 2015 p. 33.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) NGOs and FBOs are responsible to inform children and families about government services, and in some contexts, they themselves are the direct providers of key services such as informal and formal education, parenting classes and professional social work and counselling services. Findings from the Social Welfare Services Mapping study of 2015 indicated that only 33.3 percent of the existing children’s homes were officially registered by the Ministry and had operating licences. The distribution of children’s homes ownership indicated that NGOs and CBOs owned 31.4% of the Children Homes in the country; FBOs – 40.8%; private sector – 27.5% and central government owned only 0.34%³⁹.

Development Partners including United Nations Agencies

International agencies have a particular responsibility to collaborate with the national government and local actors to ensure international standards are promoted, existing systems are strengthened and not duplicated or undermined. Development partners have an important role to play in ensuring that there is adequate technical know-how and other resources required during reintegration and in supporting advocacy campaigns that inspire policy change and greater investment in child reintegration and wider child protection. How much resources development partners allocate for family reintegration activities and commitment to reach the expectations of grant recipients can have a fundamental impact on how successful these programmes are. Donors can ensure programmes reach large numbers of children who require reintegration which is not rushed and that can meet children’s needs without serious risks.

UN agencies can act as catalysts in the application of these guidelines and child rights international standards. They can introduce national governments to new ideas from other parts of the world, as well as mobilise technical expertise and resources. As multi-lateral entities, UN agencies are in a privileged position to engage with national and regional government structures, advocate for children’s rights, and facilitate the coordination of a wide range of actors.

Children Homes and other Institutions provide temporary care to children until they can **return** to their families or a long term living arrangement for their

39 URT, *Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Mapping Study Report for Social Welfare Services and Providers in Tanzania*, pgs. 32-33, August 2015.

physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs. Such Institutions are the main users of these guidelines as they provide care to vulnerable children and ensure they prepare the reintegration plans in allowing those children access their rights to develop and grow as family members.

Media: Local media can play a valuable role in informing the public about child rights and the prevention of child separation; influencing positive practices and promoting awareness on risks inherent in separation. The media should work to change attitudes and help to address the stigma and discrimination commonly faced by separated and reintegrating children.

Private Sector: The private sector can assist in the reintegration processes in a number of ways including as service providers, donating goods in kind, or helping families to generate higher incomes. They can also encourage reintegration processes by observing human rights in business by not engaging in child labour and generating awareness against worst forms of child labour, encouraging and facilitating children to return home. Those managing not-for-profit residential care facilities should plan for alternative ways that do no harm to the children in any way even when they have vested interests in preventing reintegration because their funding streams depend on the number of children in their care. Success rates for children's homes should include the percentage of children who are reintegrated with their families in their best interests.

Summary of Key Issues as they are linked with Responsibilities of different Stakeholders:

Reintegration is a sustained and complex process that must be handled professionally and guided by existing laws and regulations

The Law of the Child Act of 2009, Section 16 (a) – (p) outlines the types of children who require care and protection because they are exposed to moral or physical danger and (Section 16 (q) those children in any other environment as the Commissioner for Social Welfare may determine.

Despite the challenges in family reintegration it should not be seen as a single, one-off and stand-alone event, but rather a longer-term process with different interlinked phases, including extensive assessments, preparation, child/family

meetings and settling in, and follow-up, with proper support services provided to families and children at each step of the way. The **timeline** ought to suit the child and family, and an increase in the interval of time it takes to complete one step in the process (such as planning support for reintegration) should not be to the detriment of another step (such as follow-up and post-reintegration). The needs of children and families vary greatly, and it is not advisable to place rigid restrictions around the time needed for the reintegration process as a whole or for a particular step in supporting that process.

However, it is imperative to be mindful about delays that could interfere with child's development and the transition to adulthood. Sections 4-14 of the Child Act have enshrined fundamental rights of children and lay the foundation for a child's protection system that will oblige a range of bodies to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation of Children. Section 16 outlines the meaning of child care and protection and the duties of the Social Welfare Officer in respect of care and supervision are provided in Sec. 20.

Carers of separated children from their families without parental care in temporary care options are obliged to be guided by the Law of the Child Act, 2009 Sections 6 and 7 that a “*child has the right to know his biological parents and extended family*” and that a “*child shall be entitled to live with his parents or guardians*”. Temporary alternative care options for children include, approved residential homes or institutions as they are listed in Sec. 133(8) of the Law of the child Act. Other temporary options are foster homes (sec. 52 – 53); and fit persons. Informal fostering is common, mainly through extended family members. By 2004, 53% of orphans and other vulnerable children were being cared for by the elderly while 12% were living in child-headed households.⁴⁰

The 2016 National Guide for the Provision of Services to most vulnerable children in Local Government Authorities guide stakeholders to sections of the law, policies and guidelines and the necessary actions to be taken by social welfare officers in collaboration with other stakeholders to rescue children from various difficult circumstances and reintegrate them with their families.⁴¹

40 URT, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare Department of Social Welfare, *National Guidelines for Improving Quality of Care, Support, and Protection for Most Vulnerable Children in Tanzania*, September 2009, p. 1.

41 URT, PO-RALG, *National Policy Guide for the Provision of Services to MVCs in Local Government Authorities 2016* pp. 4 – 42.

Case could be handled by more than one Professional:

A case could, if necessary be handed over to another agency or case worker e.g. if reintegration is across borders or long distances or if staff leaves. Case workers often do not deliver all of the services/support to children and families by themselves but are able to provide information and refer to other providers.

Small number of Children who cannot be Reintegrated: Experience from other countries have demonstrated that successful family reintegration is possible even for boys who have had histories of violence, social exclusion, and from families with intergenerational failures of childhood attachments and parenting difficulties.⁴² However, It is essential to note that, there will always be a small number of children who cannot re-join their families, because it is not in their best interest or based on the risks that negatively affect the child or because families are unable to protect the child from abuse, exploitation or other risks like destitution. Some parents are often confused about how much responsibility they have for the youth or older children, particularly children who had lived independently in the streets for a long time and girl children with infants or pregnant, and about how best to help them. Sec. 98 of the Law of the Child Act provides powers to the Juvenile Court to hear and determine- applications relating to child care, maintenance and protection. In some instances, depending on the complexities of the case, application to the juvenile court for care or a supervision order may be necessary to safeguard the welfare of the child. In other cases, administrative decisions by the social welfare officer/social worker are the options to place the child in temporary alternative care arrangements while working on improving the family situation.

Availability of adequate information and Psychosocial Support

During the reintegration process both children and families require adequate information and psychosocial support in allowing them to make informed decisions. Section 143 of the Law of the Child Act states that the child in an approved residential home or institution shall be put up for adoption if it is in his/her best interest. The decision for the adoption of a child in an approved residential home or institution shall be taken by the Commissioner of Social Welfare in consultation with the management of the home. Reintegration is the primary plan but other permanent options should be available where

42 *Family for Every Child and Fundación JUCONI, A.C, Strategies to ensure the sustainable reintegration of children without parental care: JUCONI, Mexico, January 2014, p.5.*

adoption is not possible including, guardianship with relatives or other kin, typically arranged without formal legal proceedings. Another option is the assignment of legal custody through a fit person. Every child in an institution must have a child development plan and through such strategy a planned permanent living arrangement for children approaching 18 years should include empowering them to be self-reliant and financially independent.

3.3 KEY SUBJECT MATTERS IN THE REINTEGRATION PROCESS

- i. One of the matters that need to be clarified with children and families is that ‘reintegration’ is a child’s right and not a reward.
- ii. Reintegration or finding a permanent home for children with mental disability may require intense preparedness in ensuring such children are bonded well with their families and the communities.
- iii. In supporting children through the different stages of the reintegration process, **case work** is a key approach. This involves the child and family being assigned a case worker (where possible it is also advisable to assign one case worker for the child and one for the family) who provide individualised support and who prepare manuscripts of the process. Case work enables children and families to develop relationships of trust and to receive support based on a well-developed understanding of their particular needs. The documentation of the process is essential. Records are in addition used to provide lessons and to design evidence-based programming.
- iv. The reasons why children go to the streets or remain separated from their families are diverse and unique to their individual situations, these children are often vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and harm. As the relevant authorities are working to prevent more children ending up on the streets, the children who find themselves on the streets should be protected and receive appropriate services with an understanding that society’s betterment is dependent on the better social functioning of individuals in their social environment,
- v. Individual children and how they make progress through family reintegration process in a way that is appropriate for them is matter for consideration. There should be no strict time limitations; instead, in order to be effective children must not be rushed into actions for which they are not ready, however wisdom based on the best interest of the child

- must take its cause to prevent overstaying in temporary accommodation through to adulthood,
- vi. Causes of children reluctance to be reintegrated with families and ways to remedy situation must be explored. Based on the freedom of a child capable of forming views, the right to express an opinion, on matters that affect his/her well-being as it is in Sec. 11 of the Law of the Child Act 2009, children can be asked to propose alternative care of their own choices to their best interest. However, an interim care order can be provided by the court through an application by the social welfare officer only if a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm as it is in Sec. 18 (1) and (7) of the Law of the Child Act,
 - vii. Reintegration of the child in his/her family should be designed as a gradual and supervised process, accompanied by follow-up and support measures that take account of the child's age, needs and evolving capacities, as well as the causes of the separation which stand out as the main issue, Staff undertaking reintegration need to be assigned social welfare officers, trained social workers, alongside other professionals, who have experience in working with vulnerable children, have the ability to offer adequate psychosocial support, and understand the value of the underlying principles of family reintegration.
 - viii. **Concerning Skills and Values** – ⁴⁰social work professionals ought to do the following: value dignity of the child include that of children with disabilities and accept that children's **experiences vary** depending on age, gender, reasons for separation etc., observe high ethical standards and develop warm and professional relationship with the child, fight against social injustice and appreciate challenges that children and families face without being judgemental and build on strengths, encourage children to voice concerns, stimulate parental, community and family responsibility for the returning child .
 - ix. Process of family reintegration also can be initiated by the social worker from a **Non-Governmental Organization but the approval must be issued by District Social Welfare officer.**

40 Inter-Agency Group on children's Reintegration, Guidelines on Children's Reintegration, designed by Chasqui Design & Communications, 2016., p.6 and <https://www.socialworkdegreeguide.com/lists/5-important-core-social-work-values/>

3.3.1 Priority Activities/Interventions

- Important to note that activities are the means, and not an end in themselves, and it is the intention behind each activity which gives it meaning and defines the impact it will have or otherwise,
- Carry out one-to one communication sessions with the child to learn about his/her background and help a child consider the possibility of reintegrating into their family. Communication should be according to the child's age, maturity and understanding, in a language that he/she is comfortable with. Issues of disability and communication will demand attention.
- Encourage the child to reflect on his/her current circumstances and home/family situation, explaining in a relaxed setting the family background, the causes of separation and how the child feels about being reunited and the advantages of family reintegration,
- Through open ended questions and increased analysis without being judgemental determine the correctness of the information provided by individual children about their family situations,
- Together with the child, decisions are made on whether reintegration process can proceed and what should be the next steps or whether the child is to be referred to other services,
- Provide continued counselling to help the child to be psychologically prepared for anticipated changes in his/her family situation and to cope with past trauma,
- Undertake regular reviews and document the child's progress and assessments of his/her continued commitment or changing of opinion about family reintegration,
- Assess the psycho-social needs of children including life-support skills such as peer teaching, individual and group counselling as well as spiritual counselling,
- Talk to the family and other people within the home and the neighbourhood in order to reconcile the child's background story with the perspectives of those at home.
- Consult approved service providers on available options matching the needs and circumstances of the child

3.3.2 CASE PLAN

An individualised plan sets out a strategy for addressing the child's and family's needs and maximising their strengths, as identified in the assessments.

Key Issues for developing a Plan

Plans should recognise that:

- All children and families have strengths to contribute to the process
- When appropriately supported, families and children can make well-informed decisions about child well-being and protection
- Overall outcomes are improved when children and their families are centrally involved in the decision-making process.
- All actors should recognise that plans are fluid, and should be revisited at key points (e.g. when a date for reunification is decided, when reunification occurs, when there has been a crisis in the family or amongst service providers).
- In principle, care plan should be reviewed at least 28 days after it is developed, and subsequent reviews should be carried out least every three months.
- Be shared with all family members and acknowledged by signature or a similar sign
- Identify resources that the family can draw on, such as services or support in the community
- Set specific, measurable, time-bound objectives, which can be used as a tool for checking progress, including prior to case closure
- Cover all important areas of well-being and the indicators to assess them
- Be developed with the child's safety and confidentiality in mind
- Contain a contingency plan/ information about how children and family members should contact if the plan goes wrong and relationships breakdown.

Team Approach in developing the Case Plan

Agencies are encouraged to use a team approach in developing a plan, as it enhances creativity and high quality decision making; however, it does require openness and honesty amongst team members. Where possible, encourage the child to choose some of the support team, and extend invitations beyond the immediate family and main agency

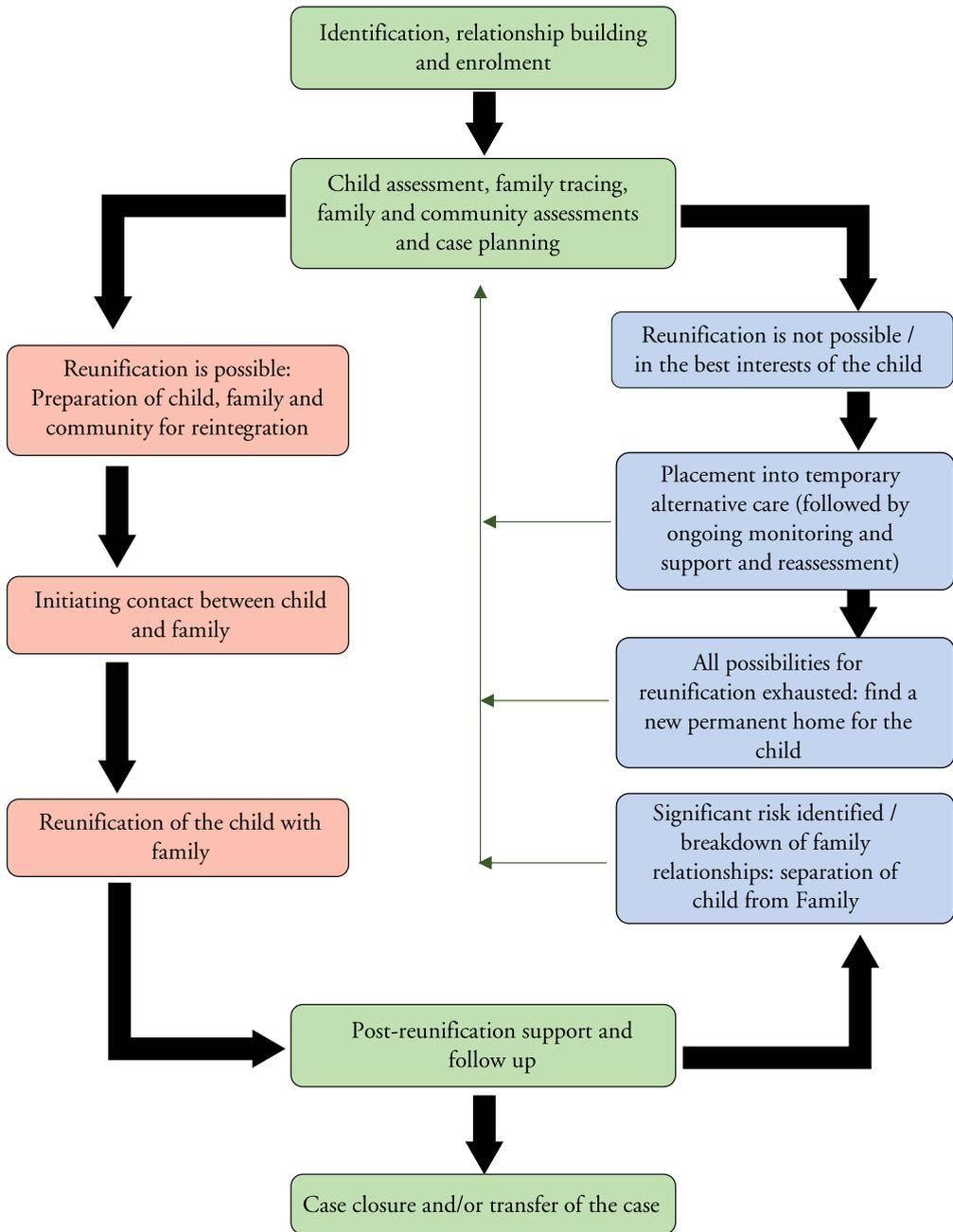
Where possible, especially where dynamics are complex, it is recommended that a meeting is organised involving the child and family members. This may be done through family conferencing where children and family members come together to develop a plan for the child with the facilitation of professionals. Where it is not possible or wise to bring everyone together, a series of individual meetings may be necessary. These meetings should be in person, though in some extreme cases where very long distances or security are an issue, discussions over the phone may be necessary.

3.4 STEPS IN THE FAMILY REINTEGRATION PROCESS

At the different levels, much of the work will be focused directly on supporting the children, taking care of their immediate basic needs plus helping them to build the skills and resources they require to adjust and move on with their lives. Reintegration as a process involves parents or carers, siblings, extended family and community at various levels. In summary the process involves preparations, managing the initial periods of meetings where reintegration is phased gradually, with the child and family becoming familiarised to each other and sustaining the family reintegration. The different activity steps will utilise the appropriate forms available within the Department of Social Welfare, e.g. case management forms and assessment forms to mention a few.

Therefore, reintegration of children with their families will involve the following steps:





STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION OF THE CHILD, RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AND ENROLMENT

The entry point of the work with families is identifying and enrolling children separated from their families into the reintegration process. It is important to build a trusting and respectful relationship to enable children feel safe and open up to the social welfare officer/social worker. At this stage the focus is to build a relationship with the child, to enable him/or her to open up and share information that will help the case manager during the reintegration process. In case of a traumatised child, the model to be used should help the child to recognise and interpret his own emotions appropriately. In case of a child who has suffered loss, allow the child to reflect on the sufferings and empower the child to plan for the future.

Points to Note

- Create a safe and positive environment for the child to participate bearing in mind that some of those children have experienced loss, violence, extreme poverty and deprivation
- Assess child's capability and history while ensuring questions are age appropriate
- Avoid being judgemental
- Understand the child emotionally
- Rescue the child to a place of a safety (where applicable)
 - Inform the child the next steps to be taken
 - Ensure confidentiality is observed as required

STEP II. CHILD ASSESMENT, FAMILY TRACING, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS

ASSESSING THE CHILD

Patience and resilience are the norms in building trust between case worker and the child. The child should not feel that he/she is being pressurised while ensuring the well-being of the child is quickly assessed by a trained professional. If situation permits each child should receive support from a professional of their choice.

Key Issues in Assessing the Child:

In assessing the child, the Social Welfare Officer and Social Workers involved in the assessment should pay attention to the following issues:

- Reasons for remaining separated from parents/guardians or for leaving home
- Stability and length of timeout of home care or in the streets
- Number and type of difficulties, risks and mitigations prior to placement
- Parents and children's motivation for reintegration to occur
- Age, gender and culture of the child
- Behavioural problems experienced
- Influence of social changes on the social case work such as unemployment, migration, and bad harvests.
- Quality of parent or caregiver/child relationship in case of temporary placement and considering parental-skills training where necessary
- Health and educational needs
- Identify key persons and their contact information (including government officials, community case workers and para-social workers, family members or any person who might assist to trace the family).
- Explore how to get to know the family and the community where the child comes from e.g. through community situation reports, phone calls, visits, local government officials i.e. social welfare officers in collaboration with other professional at ward, village and *mtaa* levels.

Activities/Interventions in the Assessment of the Child

- Conduct one to one sessions with the child to get more information about his/her background
- Review information from the child file (including information from initial and social investigation reports and individual care plans) if they exist
- Contact and/or meet key persons to get more information or validate the information previously collected.
- Take time to observe the child's behaviour while using different tools and games as appropriate and build good rapport between the case worker and the child.
- Keep record of the information collected.

Points to Note

- Professionals in the juvenile justice system should address the importance of investing in child offender's family and social re-integration in order to prevent reoffending and contribute to increased parental responsibilities, child development and public duties and safety;
- Evaluate child current environment and the negative and effects of removing the child from same;
- Consider resources required for the child's physical, educational, behavioural, social, emotional, spiritual, relational changes and material well-being to allow the child to survive, grow and develop;
- Carefully consider if the child requires other services like medical attention, rehabilitation or/and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against the child like worst forms of child labour, human trafficking, sexual exploitation and consider which services are available in his/her community
- Consider liaising with Gender and Children Desks at Police Stations in addressing crimes that relate to child abuse and violation of child rights;
- Exercise patience and flexibility to ensure a child understands the proposed actions and expresses willingness, commitment to living with family;
- Trained staff to assess each child and be able to respond to emotional and psychological distresses;
- Trust built between social welfare officer/social workers and the child and respecting child's rights and dignity;
- Carefully consider if children should be involved in legal proceedings against the perpetrators of their rights as exploiters/abusers,
- Include a range of perspectives in the assessment of the child e.g. relationship with siblings and other children, teachers, extended family members, neighbours, and health practitioners;

FAMILY TRACING

Key Issues in Family Tracing

Tracing the family geographical location should be done by the Social Welfare Officers/Social Workers in collaboration with other stakeholders supporting the child. It is often necessary for the child to assist staff in locating his/her home through a visit/s that include the social welfare officer/social worker with whom the child already has a trusting relationship. In cases where family tracing is done while accompanied by the child, initial direct contact with the family should

be done by the professional social welfare officer/social workers himself/herself because of the uncertainty about how the child will be received by the family. Good practice is to leave the child with a social worker or in the local leader's office until you are sure it is okay for the child to meet the parents and family members. This is especially true in cases where the child had committed a serious offence before running away from home and/or it is a case of child abuse, and the abuser is a family member and may possibly meet his/her abuser again during the visit. The social welfare officer/ social worker should carefully explain to the child the purpose of the visit(s) and what might happen, such as not being able to find the home or family members, so that the child is well prepared.

Activities:

- Review information from the child file (including information from initial and social investigation reports)
- Case manager to probe for details, e.g. if the child has nicknames, to identify the family members and other demarcation like a school, church, mosque that can give a lead to the family compound, in cases where the child can provide the name of the local leader, or village their contacts would be used to locate the family.
- Identify key persons and their contact information (including government officials, family members or any person who might assist to trace the family).
- If family tracing is done in another district, make sure the Social Welfare Officer in that district is involved to coordinate all tracing activities in his/her district.
- Contact and/or meet key persons to get more information or validate the information collected Conduct home/family visits to assess the family.

ASSESSING THE FAMILY

Family Situational Analysis

A situational analysis of both nuclear and extended family is carried out while respecting rights and dignity of family members. It could include:

- Family **strengths** e.g. trustworthiness and economic situation;
- Family **weaknesses** e.g. dysfunctional family, divorced parents Family
- Family **opportunities** e.g. capacity to provide care and services and

- **Family threats** e.g. possibility of any form of abuse and exploitation and lack of discipline.

Preliminary assessment should include the right of the family to have access to accurate information about the child while ensuring confidentiality and the best interests of the child. Interviews, discussions and observations involve all family members and take into consideration risks that can affect the well-being of the child and mitigating factors. Staff members must be aware of individual family members' perceptions about the separation and reintegration, their willingness and commitment to provide physical space to accommodate the child and cater for concerns, needs and rights, based on age and sex. It is essential that signs of violence and abuse are observed and the opportunity is used to create awareness against gender based violence and violence against children targeting all family members and where possible the whole community.

Family Meeting: Where feasible a family/clan meeting will be convened involving immediate and extended family members, health officials, child welfare practitioners, school teacher, selected members of protection committee at village level and other local government officials. The meeting allows for both immediate and extended family members and service providers to make informed decisions about the best way to support the family to take care of their child. Preparatory activities incorporate extensive arrangements involving the social welfare officer/social worker as the coordinator, meetings with all family members, local leaders and service providers who will be invited to the family meeting

Points to Note

- Family tracing normally takes place after the initial assessment of the child, and may include identifying and tracing nuclear family and other members of both maternal and paternal clans in different locations who could take care of the child directly and indirectly.
- The Assigned Social Welfare Officer will coordinate the process of family tracing, and this may involve working with other Social Workers from other NGOs who are supporting the same child.
- In some contexts, there may be a legal or administrative requirement to carry out a Best Interests Determination (BID), and as it is always valuable to properly assess the best interests of the child which consider the overall situation of the child. It means the survival and development of the child are generally ensured ultimately by remaining in or maintaining close contacts with the family and the child's social and cultural networks⁴⁴;
- It may be necessary to create or use the authority within and if possible the team of decision makers within the institution or the programme to review the recommendations of the social welfare officer or social worker involved in the management of the case and make a final decision;
- Family tracing may not be successful in early stages, and this should be an opportunity to review the assessment and if possible carry out a fresh assessment of the child.
- Risk factors that affect the safety and well-being of the child and changes that need to be made
- Family strengths and resilience, including those of siblings
- Family members' perception of the reasons for separation and other problems
- Family's level of readiness/capacity for change
- Family's ability to care for the child and family's economic situation.
- Important to note that families have a choice about reintegration and should not be forced to take children back if they are not ready

⁴⁴ UNHCR, *the Field Handbook for the Implementation of UNHCR BID Guidelines*, 2011 p. 50, (N.B. UNHCR started implementing BID Process in 2006 in Tanzania with the IRC and WVT (World Vision Tanzania) in the context of voluntary repatriation of Burundian and Congolese refugees, providing additional safeguards and protection measures, for unaccompanied and separated children or children who were facing abuse or custody issues).

- Despite the fact that families after a clear explanation of the role of parental care as in CRC and the Law of the Child Act of 2009 and the necessity for a child to grow up in a family setting. Such decision should be made after there have been some interventions on family strengthening and if the parents wish to give up their parental rights and responsibilities they should be given adequate time to contemplate over the decision and do so formally.
- Families need to have clear and accurate information made available to them in order to make informed decisions
- Treating the family with dignity and respect and consider strengths and weaknesses in both the child's immediate and extended family and ways of addressing the threats
- Preparedness at all times to probe the issue of domestic or sexual violence against any child in the household, and to respond to any disclosure or concern at any stage in the reintegration process
- Issues of domestic violence need to be discussed because of the linkage between children's decision to leave home and GBV in the household
- All children in the household should be involved in the family assessment. Staff member must be aware of violence and abuse signs and if necessary undertake proper training and to take other immediate, effective action.

ASSESSING THE COMMUNITY:

Communities have a vital role in accepting child reintegration, monitor and provide traditional social safety nets and hold accountable those that provide formal social services. Hence the following aspects are vital to consider while conducting community assessment:

Key Issues

- Gender inequalities aspects in the community for example boys and girls education, cultural practices and the impact of social and cultural practices on gender equality,
- Community's cultural and social perception towards specific child practices and orientation; example the perception towards a child living and working in streets.
- Extent to which neighbourhood structures shape social interactions with families or clans,
- High risks in the community environment that make family reintegration less effective,

- Social support mechanisms in the form of traditional social protection in case of hardships that are spontaneous with mutual reciprocity,
- Formal social protection in the form of cash transfer like the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) or material support through FBOs and others by NGOs and the state agencies targeting the poor. The support mechanisms strengthen social organization and social integration at the community and family levels,
- Evaluation of social-economic development in the community and productive structures,
- Decentralized local governance structures that empower communities to convene meetings and make decisions on matters that affect their development,
- Social services available in the community taking into account formal and informal education, vocational training and health services.
- Consider other child stakeholders

Activities/Interventions

- Using community risk assessment and resource mapping to understand support and resources in the community including access to land by women and analysis of the information;
- Organising awareness -raising sessions through different approaches like campaigns in the community to reduce stigma;
- Bringing the community together in meetings to allow them to explore what they think the challenges are for older children returning home and identifying what could be done by the community to support them;
- Advocate for schools and other institutions to accept and support most vulnerable children and young people; including children who were previously living /working on the streets
- Evaluate the impact of the community wide environment on both economic and social well-being of the family and the child;

Points to Note

Participatory Community assessment that involves members of the community and local leaders as it allows community members to feel confident as active agents, involved and part of the process;

- Assessment of community capacity to provide required support to poor families;
- Assessment of the community level of capacity to address child vulnerability and child protection;
- Assessment of community capacity to prevent and address stigma, discrimination and violation of child rights in general;
- Level of social service provision and accountability in the community e.g. long distances to schools and low quality education demotivate children from sustained school attendance;
- Community cohesion and future sustainability of economic plans.

STEP III: PREPARATION OF CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY FOR REINTEGRATION:

Preparation of Children and Families

Children and families need proper preparation before reintegration occurs which should be sought as a priority, even if the family of origin does not seem “*ideal*” because of socio-economic status compared to the majority of the population. The need to create an atmosphere for healing and rehabilitation is vital for effective reintegration. Children should have regular opportunities to speak to a consistent carer/case worker. Children who have been without any adult carer for long periods of time may need support in adopting behaviours that will fit with family and community expectations. Routine and predictability can give children who have led chaotic lives whilst separated a sense of control and reduce their anxiety.

Once a child has been admitted in temporary alternative care whether it is an institution or a family placement that is safe and in conducive environment, the social welfare officers/social workers should develop good working relationships with the child and must start the preparations for an effective reintegration by consideration of the following:

- Review on the underlying and immediate causes of the separation (*medical, economic, all forms of violence, social exclusion or disability*), the length of time that the child spent while separated, and the child's and family's experiences during separation; and to ensure that children and families will have access to all available forms of support necessary for safe and effective reintegration;
- Recognize and value measures of protection and existing potentialities in the family environment that could increase the chances of improving the status of the family and helping the child's reintegration. There may be a need for intensive work to address violence, abuse and neglect within families, and for household economic strengthening
- Examine the child's mental and physical health and psychosocial needs, social and legal aspects that might make reintegration challenging and offer counselling services where necessary
- Develop conflict resolution mechanisms. Some separated children are accustomed to a high level of autonomy and may resist guidance and boundaries. Effective mechanisms for dealing with anger and conflict can also be used in home communities.
- Develop children's capacity to act autonomously. Some separated children have spent prolonged periods stripped of their autonomy and ability to make decisions, and may need to be encouraged to engage in decision making about their lives once more. For example, ensure children are involved in developing/modifying their care plan, and create a children's advisory council to make recommendations to inform programme management.
- Draw up a family contact strategy, with the participation of the child (depending upon his/her capacity and age) and of his family considering that in some instances, family initial contact should be gradual and it is imperative that the social workers/social welfare officer accompany the child and family during the process and as the healing progression takes place.

NB: Locate foster care placements and approved residential homes as close to home as possible. Proximity often eases the reintroduction to parents or caregivers. There are exceptions to this guidance, as some children find that distance from their communities during the preparatory stage allows them time to heal, recover and prepare in peace and quiet. Agencies should strive to gauge each child's needs in this respect. It is important to make certain that children do not become trapped in alternative care for long periods as this is only a temporary solution

and it does not provide them with the stable homes they need for a sense of security and belonging before they become adults. However, children should remain in alternative care while preparations for reintegration progress or, where it is not possible, a new permanent family will be sought.

Key Issues

The following are the issues in the preparation of children, families and communities

a). Address Abuse, Neglect, Violence, Exploitation and Gender Inequality in the Family:

While acute poverty, abuse, neglect, violence, gender inequalities and exploitation within the family are common reasons why children leave home. In few instances separated children could have behavioural problems because once such children lose their parental care the chances of developing problematic behaviours is high.. Safety of other children in the families and other family members should be considered by working with such children to change positively and for families to realise that change of behaviour is the common norm as children grow-up. Responding effectively to preparations should consider:

- i. Prioritising children's safety, such as giving consideration to obtaining court orders, administrative or family decisions against the abusers as necessary;
- ii. Seeking ways of dealing with emerging situation e.g. reactions that lead to further harm to the children such as being blamed and facing differential treatment;
- iii. A thoughtful assessment of the impact of the abuse, particularly assessing the emotional and psychological well-being of the child and other family members, and the impact of violence and abuse on family relationships and dynamics and seeking ways of lessening the negative effects.
- iv. Provide opportunities to express emotions safely (e.g. to dance, to listen to or create music, to create a scrapbook, to act).
- v. Boys and girls could be discriminated against because of their life styles and risks during separation, such as their association with criminal groups, exposure to sexual abuse or exploitation, HIV/AIDS, pregnancies out of marriage, or exploitative worst forms of labour. Embarking upon discrimination, issues of individuality and distinctiveness is essential before children return home as the way children are perceived by others will often influence how they see themselves, impact on their self-esteem and the effectiveness of integration.

Social Welfare Officers/ Social Workers have to mediate between the child and family and/or community members, helping them express their feelings and accept changes in the child. Families should not expect children to return to being exactly as they were prior to the separation and a child needs to recognise that his/her previous role and ‘identity’ might have changed

b). Meeting Mental and Physical Health Needs and Responding to Abnormal Behaviours

Orphans for instance are exposed to additional stressors from the life changes associated with the death of parents, including separation from siblings, loss of family and social support, and instability in new living situations.⁴⁵ The Law of the Child, Section 10 forbids depriving a child a reasonable enjoyment out of the estate of parents but most MVCs are not protected from violation of their inheritance rights.

- It is important that family members know and observe the signs of mental challenges and commit themselves to taking the appropriate actions. Discussions with family members need to establish awareness about the rights of the child, child physical health and nutritional needs including those with unwanted behaviours and the family capacity to consider those needs a priority, take responsibility and avoid possible harm and thoughtless acts. One important aspect in the awareness is that children’s mental health problems are real, common and treatable and that without treatment, children with mental health issues are at increased risk of dropping-out of school, academic and social failure, falling victims of being in conflict with the law, dependency, and even with high probability of contemplating suicide⁴⁶.

c). Supporting Children With Disabilities

Supporting reintegrating children with disabilities makes reference to the Persons with Disability Act of 2010, Section 6 which prohibits all forms of discrimination on the basis of disability. Social Welfare Officer will contact Local government officials who are designated with the duty to keep and maintain a register of persons

45 Shannon Dorsey, et al, *the Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*. 203(11):864–870, *A Qualitative Study of Mental Health Problems among Orphaned Children and Adolescents in Tanzania*, Nov. 2015. (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles>)

46 *Mental Health America (MHA), Recognizing Mental Health Problems in Children, (undated) in* (<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net>)

with disabilities as required by the same Act in Sec. 20(5). The Law of the Child, 2009 section 8(5) states that - “*A person shall not treat a child with disabilities in an undignified manner*”. Social welfare and social workers need to collaborate with parents and family members, village/*mtaa* and ward officials (VEO, WEO), CSOs and other stakeholders where necessary to ensure protection of children with disabilities.

d). Planning for Education, Building Resilience and Life Skills Training

- i. Many children miss out on schooling while they are separated and need help to catch up before they can enter schools in their home communities. It should be noted that lack of quality education in home communities can often create difficult dilemmas around the reintegration process. For secondary school level, particularly in rural areas, children, families and case workers will need to consider if it is viable to return children to settings where there is no access to secondary schools or if other alternatives should be sought - such as placement with relatives during the academic year;
- ii. Enable children to interact with local communities and not become isolated. Whatever the form of care, children should be able to go to school in the neighbourhood, shop in the local market etc.
- iii. Social Welfare Officer/Social Worker support to children’s education is as vital
- iv. Request a qualified teacher/ward education officer to carry out an assessment of the child’s existing levels of education and educational aspirations, in relation to literacy and numeracy to ensure the child is placed in the right level of education and is supported to navigate his/her way into the new school and next level of academia through sessions to acclimate to the new environment;
- v. Address any gaps identified after carrying out an assessment of the child’s existing ‘life skills’ including problem solving, communication and other interpersonal skills, as well sexual and reproductive health awareness, hygiene, financial literacy, performance of household tasks, etc.;
- vi. In collaboration with teachers make efforts to rebuild the studying and learning habits of a child who has been out of school for long periods;
- vii. Ensure that the child has access to education during the preparatory phase and is prepared for any changes in the home community;
- viii. Collaborate with district and ward education officer to create awareness

among teaching staff about the educational and psychosocial needs of the children who are reintegrating. Request teachers to keep an eye on such children, build rapport with individual children, and establish an ongoing working relationship between social welfare officer/social workers and teachers.

- ix. Consider vocational training as a better option for some older children.
- x. Work with education officer to increase physical, academic and social accessibility and support for children with mental and physical disabilities within an inclusive education system.
- xi. Education Circular No. 3 of 2016 enforces implementation of free education and directs District Education officers to collaborate with communities to effect mechanisms for school feeding programmes.

e). Household Economic Strengthening and Material Support

- i. Poverty is a significant underlying factor in the majority of cases of separation of children from families and a primary cause in many instances in relation to risks children face. Effective economic strengthening measures can reduce both poverty and tension within a family. Subsequently, it is important to recognise the role that poverty may have played in any case of separation and to address it appropriately and effectively. During the preparatory phase, it is important to take the following measures:
- ii. Ensure that economic interventions are tailored to the household's capacities and the economic context. For example, household at the level of destitution needs support for basic consumption, such as a government cash grant or in-kind transfer and resilience training.
- iii. Steps to improve household economic stability may include collaboration with NGOs or development programmes in the area that provide productive agricultural assets and knowledge, structured savings and lending opportunities like VICOBA and SACCOS, relevant training for financial literacy or technical skills, support with health issues or disability, etc. Attention is given to avoiding potential increased vulnerability issues for example stressful borrowing by women and increased child labour.
- iv. Building social capital while strengthening household economic and material support:
 - o In the Tanzanian context, social capital is a household asset that include kinship and community social networks and membership of formalized

groups. Social capital contributes to reducing vulnerability as the social relationships provide a sense of safety, trust, helping out in case of emergencies and other adverse situations.

- o Social work facilitators will explore the advantages of consolidation of the different types of social capital among families and communities in the reintegration process according to traditions and formal approaches.
- o In household economic strengthening and material support, networks are established as part of improving social capital. Direct links are made between inclusion of the marginalized and economic prosperity in the vision of a society where high skills, high rewards and access to education and training are open to everyone;
- o Strengthening existing women's groups' means members gain economic and cultural resources from being part of a network of social relationships which on the other hand build social and cultural capital. Women are the main actors in strengthening social capital through women's groups for economic and social prosperity and improved child wellbeing. Social workers could encourage households to bond and bridge across differences and be able to link with organisations and programmes.

f). Provision of Medical and Health Services

- i. Reintegrating adolescents and youth require access to quality sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services to meet their developing needs because of the significant biological, physical, emotional, and behavioural changes. SRH initiatives will have to be mainstreamed in the education, health and medical services.
- ii. Social Welfare and Social Workers will ensure there is follow-up to adverse health conditions affecting the child at the different levels from village/mtaa dispensary, health centre, district hospital, regional and national referral hospitals depending on type of medical condition.

Activities/Interventions

Main focus is ensuring a caring environment in the pre-reintegration period: Throughout the preparatory stage, it is important to consider removing children from the streets and other situations of immediate harm while they wait for family reintegration;

- Cross-check file, information from Police, local government, the child and other sources to determine geographical location of the members of the child's family of origin including the clan and members of the extended family;
- Conduct periodic counselling sessions with the child to prepare her/him psychologically for reunification with their family. This may include assisting the child to address issues that contributed in taking her from his/her family.
- Preparing children for reintegration include helping them learn about the situation in their families, communities, their traditions and cultures particularly those that have been separated for long periods of time;
- Prepare parents for the change in the family as current family relationships might be affected and assess parents' progress in resolving the initial problem necessitating placement and identify with the parents a tentative reintegration **date**. Close contact with the family in the home is essential to assessing the progress made by the family and for recommending reintegration; Use games and other art works where children can express and communicate their emotional needs

Points to note while Preparing Family and Children

- Provide individual consistent attention
- Staff Consistency. The same person as much as possible to work with the parent/child each time
- Regular visits while demonstrating reliability and importance given the individual's needs. As most people in the past will have provided unreliable, you must always keep your words to demonstrate that this is a different kind of relationship. This include being punctual and always keeping appointments. (Regular visit its more applicable to local cases; within your working area)
- Application of good listening skills
- Consider working with both male and female in the family during the intervention process

STEP IV. INITIAL CONTACT BETWEEN CHILD AND FAMILY

Family reintegration involves the formal or even legal transfer of guardianship to the family, and the case plan for the child may also require collaboration with other agencies and departments e.g. Local Government Authorities, the judiciary, NGOs etc. However, using the law enforcers to force parents or other caregivers to accept a child for reintegration is not recommended. Awareness about the responsibilities of parents as stated in the Law of the Child, 2009 sec. 7 to 11 is necessary in encouraging families to do the right thing and to be law abiding without being forced.

Key Issues

- Good traditional ceremonies during the initial contact may be valuable as a way of putting emphasis on the commitment and readiness.
- Where contact between the family and child has been broken, re-establishing such contacts is a significant part of the reintegration process and needs to be handled carefully, especially if there is blame or fear on either side.
- Children and families must be adequately prepared and interactions should initially be done gradually through remote communications (e.g. via phone, letters and third person), followed by short supervised face-to-face meetings, then longer supervised visits and in time unsupervised visits to the family home.
- Readiness of families and the children while taking into consideration the best interest of the child are the main issues and determining factors. Variations between individual families and communities are expected. When children and families are ready, children can return permanently.

Family Responsibility towards Children: It is important to explain and allow family members to understand their responsibility towards children and the long-term negative impact of rejecting reintegration and if children are not helped to maintain family connection, and adapting to the local lifestyle, they may not return to the community, even after completing their education

Activities (Phases during Initial Contacts)

Families need to build a positive vision of what kind of relationship they could have with their children and focus on the future. The following phases should be observed during initial contacts;

- *Allow distant contacts* through phone calls, phone messages, letters or third person after liaising with the social welfare officials attached to the Local Government Authority in the area or social worker affiliated to an NGO that is supporting the child or family. These initial contacts can help break down emotional barriers, and enable children and families to get to recollect about each other positively for good reasons,
- *Short face-to-face meetings between parents and child* under the direct supervision of a social welfare/social worker. If possible the parent should visit the child in an appropriate venue, which provides a clear indication of the parent's commitment and willingness to be part of family reintegration
- *Longer, supervised visits at the parent's home:* The objectives of these visits are to assess family functioning and the child's ability to readjust to the community and lifestyle. Professional intervention is required if the child is facing significant challenges,
- *Longer, unsupervised visits at the parent's home:* only performed after supervised visits have been successful. Furthermore, the assigned Social Welfare Officer/Social Worker must be confident that the child will be able to readjust to the local lifestyle and that the parents/caregivers are able to support the child to adjust and provide much needed care.

The Social Welfare Officer/Social Worker will advise on the length of the visits/meetings after assessing the situation when contacts are made. However, it is imperative to consider that any of these steps can be skipped if the Social Welfare Officer/Social Worker thinks it is to the best interest of the child and a proper assessment of the situation has been made.

STEP V: FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Family reunification is the step that transfers care and/or formal guardianship of the child back to his or her parents or traditional caregiver.

Key Issues to Consider during Family Reunification:

- Reunification could be made eventful and may take place at the children's home or other temporary facility and allow peers and carers to say goodbye at the children's home. It can also take place at a neutral location, or in the child's community of origin with the participation of local government officials at village/*mtaal* ward/district levels.

- The family and/or community who have been preparing for the child's return may want to recognise it in an elaborate manner through, for example, speeches or a welcoming ceremony that is culturally appropriate. Since this event could be passionately challenging for children, it is suggested that they be given as much control over it as possible by allowing them to participate in decision making as children at this stage are well informed about what is expected from them and expressed willingness to family reunification.
- Parents or their representatives or caregivers should state in writing their willingness to resume responsibility for the child and that they understand the implications of the family reunification.

Activities/Interventions

- **Case transfer: Paper work and handing-over of copies of documents** about the child to the social welfare officer/social worker who will be supporting smooth family reintegration process and follow-up actions within the local government authority where the family home is located, will treat this as an open case until when the child and family have been supported and an assessment has been conducted to confirm that they do not need further support, hence case closure.
- Moreover, Social Welfare Officer/Social Worker who initiated the family reintegration process will keep its files open, monitor for post reunification follow-up, note signs of re-separation and successful reintegration, and evaluate results and document case studies for future references and learnings.
- Finalise arrangements on access to new services for example submission of transfer forms from the school or vocational training institution where the child was studying during the transition or while in the Approved School, from health service providers, psychotherapy/counselling experts and any police reports or legal proceedings against abusers of the child rights within the family or community. Intervention should be done ideally before leaving the child if a child requires immediate or continuous medical attention for example in the case HIV/AIDS and other chronic diseases.

STEP VI: POST REUNIFICATION SUPPORT AND FOLLOW UP

Reintegrating children and their families benefit from follow-up support. If the preparations have been extensive, if little post-reunification support was identified

as being required in the plan, and if everyone feels ready for this transition, then the intensity of interventions and length of this stage may be minimal. In many cases however, there is much work to be done at the individual, family and community level. The first few months are usually of the greatest importance

Key Issues Working with Families, Communities and Schools

- Support to the family after reunification needs to be planned such that it is gradually reduced as time goes on - leading eventually to a point of closure of case basing on recommendation of the review of a care plan developed during reunification. Prospective continuing and long term solutions to various challenges associated with the reunification may be found within any of the entities including the extended family network, the village/*mtaa* government, ward officials, school teachers, religious community groups, local Protection Committees or community elders. It is important to support and encourage interactions between the family and these entities.
- The nature and timing of termination of support to the family of reintegration needs to be discussed and jointly agreed upon by the responsible social welfare officer/social worker and the family members including the reintegrated child and on the understanding that all is well and that no further involvement of the social welfare office is needed. It is however rational for the assigned social welfare officer to make several other visits to ascertain whether there is continuity of peace and harmony in the family which should be made to understand also that contact with the Social Welfare Department remains open in case the family is faced with a need for consultation, for advice or support
- Termination of support is something which the family needs to anticipate all along the reintegration process as will have been indicated by the concerned staff members. Hereafter, the family is prepared psychologically when the time comes. The existence of and access to local-support institutions such as the village/*mtaa* government, the local religious community, parent/neighbourhood groups or ward education committee where necessary adds to the confidence of the family to cope even after the termination of the agency support.
- The first few months of family reunification are important in ensuring successful process. Follow-up support builds up on the work done during the preparatory and family reunification stages. It is important that social

welfare officers/social workers vigilantly strengthen mechanisms to monitor children after return to their families including those who have returned home on their own without professional intervention.

- Much of the continuous monitoring work is done by the “Mtaa”/Village local government officials and protection committees in collaboration with social welfare officers and social workers. In addition, children, families and communities will need different forms of follow-up support which may include the continuation of: support to address the root causes of separation -such as violence in the home or neighbourhood, combating household poverty and gaps in accessing basic services such as health and education; work to address the stigma and discrimination commonly faced by reintegrating children; therapeutic support and mediation, and support in forming new friendships.
- Addressing the root causes of separation within the family and community is vital for preventing re-separation, and, if handled carefully, can strengthen parenting skills, improve wider efforts to protect child rights and preparing reintegrated children to be responsible citizen
- Children may struggle at the initial stages as they re-enter the communities and mainstream schools. They need support from actors in the community and other children to be able to overcome the difficulties during the transition period and avoid relapsing into separation.
- The role of the community in child protection is vested in the government structures at that level, which include the village/*mtaa* government structure, the school committee, ward education committee, child rights and protection committees. NB

During the course of reintegration however, community involvement needs to be carefully undertaken to ensure that details of the child’s experiences are kept confidential from the general public in order to safeguard the child from unnecessary stigmatization which might amount to a setbacks towards effective family reintegration.

Vulnerable children are often most associated with absenteeism, truancy in schools and are in need of safety and support to assist them towards smooth transition in enrolling back to school and completion of primary and secondary education.

Another gap relate to shortages of school materials and supplies– e.g. school uniforms or writing supplies that parents are usually expected to provide.

Activities/Interventions in Working with Communities

- Advocate for increased participation of lower local authorities at the community level in performing their oversight roles in child protection including family reintegration.
- Consult community leaders and members to find out the community's responses to the child's presence and how the child is adjusting to the community norms and values.
- Combine community awareness and mobilization on child protection with provision of skills for household engagement in Savings and Credit Associations and cooperatives for increased household incomes to enable them to support the education of their children including reintegrated children.
- Convening meetings with communities to explore any tensions that may exist, recognising that these may arise from stigma and discrimination against reintegrating children, and from children who continue to behave in stereotypical ways that the community rejects e.g. promiscuous behaviour, drug or alcohol abuse and the ensuing fear about other children picking up such behaviours.
- Enabling a dialogue between the child/family and the community if the community feels threatened in anyway. Encourage children to (re)learn local languages, expectations and traditions.
- Consolidate relationships with community through the use of traditional or religious ceremonies, if the child has acted in a way that the community considers to be not appropriate, but ensuring that the child's overall well-being is prioritized and his/her strengths and opportunities are also acknowledged.

Activities/Interventions in Working with Schools:

- SWO/SW need to share with communities and schools information on effects of discrimination that the child is likely to face in schools at the hands of teachers, parents and students on the basis of gender, background, age, language, religion and disability and make efforts to correct the situation.
- Sensitize and encourage child protection teams and school committees to

campaign for quality education and 100% rate of school enrolment for both vulnerable boys and girls and identify those reintegrated with families.

- Link with teachers to provide additional support to help reintegrating children who have missed out on schooling to catch up with the appropriate level.
- Engage teachers to help students/pupils at the schools understand problems that returning children have experienced and involve them in helping these children to reintegrate into the school and community;
- Collaborate with education officials to ensure that schools are safe havens for children. Link with existing initiatives to reduce violence in schools including gender based violence and take steps to address situations where schools are used as recruiting grounds for human trafficking, child labour, gangs or drug users.
- Encourage teachers to introduce peer-to-peer support teams, or pairing with each newly reintegrated child with a friend. Here it may also be important to offer concrete support to schools to accommodate additional number of students, e.g. additional desks.

Points to Note

- Consultation is vital with protection committees, which are the community entry point for programme and individual child involvement in verification of needy children. Such discussions may provide an avenue for prospective support to reintegrating families in need of support for their children.
- Prevention of child separation from his/her family is an important strategy and approach. Staff should use the opportunities created during the preparatory and follow-up visits to address the root causes of separation by, for example, raising awareness of the risks of separation and building the capacity of social workers and community development workers who work in direct contact with communities.
- Another way is to establish a mechanisms in collaboration with other stakeholders to detect early signs of increasing chances of separation and establish an internal mechanism to submit relevant information that will be utilised in planning actions.
- Analyse trends of child vulnerability and address some of the common underlying problems associated with family unit breakdown and instability.

STEP VII: POST REINTEGRATION, CASE CLOSURE AND TRANSFER

Reintegration cases are closed when the child's safety and well-being are secure and the objectives of the most recent plan have been met. This can be a difficult process for child and case worker and should be handled with care.

Closing a case occurs when the Social Welfare Officer/Social Worker is confident that the child's safety and wellbeing are secure. Case closure should only be considered when the objectives agreed in the most recent version of the 'care' plan have been met i.e. when there has been adequate progress against clear benchmarks or if the child or parent/caregiver proactively requests it.

Key Issues:

- Review all observations and recommendations suggested in the care plan review forms made during case follow up;
- Consider with the child and family the overall progress they have made against the case plan's objectives;
- Consult with other service providers (including teachers, health workers, etc.) to obtain a broad range of perspectives; and
- Carefully assess the likelihood and potential severity of risks to the child.

Once all this information has been taken into account, the assigned Social Welfare Officer/Social Worker may recommend that the case be closed with a final decision being made by a Head of Social Welfare Department in the council or inter-agency case review panel.

As the end point of the agency's intervention, case closure needs to be an explicit goal that is reiterated at key points from day one. Given many children's understandable fear of abandonment by the case worker and/or child protection system, it is recommended to provide an estimated timeframe for the closure process.

The child may have spent months or even years benefitting from the care and support of the agency and developed a close bond with specific workers. He or she should be sensitively informed that agency visits will soon cease, and when that will happen. All updated documentation should be retained confidentially in case re-separation occurs and cases have to be re-opened. Where relevant, it is important to link the child to any services offered to children leaving care.

Case closure can be difficult for a case worker. However, continuing to monitor a family when a child is safe is costly and contributes to their dependency on the agency. From the outset, agencies must prevent the ‘our children’ mentality from taking root in staff, whether paid or volunteer; they must actively discuss and monitor such perceptions with any community-based actors.

The length of time the agency works with the family depends on how quickly the family makes adequate progress against the clear benchmarks in the agreed plan, and there should not be any set time period or set number of visits. This flexible approach may require agencies to educate donors, local governments and other service providers.

SECTION IV: MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CHILD REINTEGRATION PROCESS

Monitoring and evaluation of family reintegration is an assessment of and learning about whether or not the activities benefited the child and if they made positive impacts. Knowledge generated through learning is captured and disseminated to facilitate improvement of future case work. It requires work with relevant stakeholders to identify the core elements of ‘successful’ reintegration and to produce indicators of success. In line with the definition of reintegration included in these guidelines, ‘successful reintegration “should consider not just whether children have been reunited with families, but also if they gained a sense of belonging and purpose in all spheres of life”⁴⁷.

Careful monitoring of reintegration processes is vital both to ensure quality interventions that benefit children and for overall learning. Children, families and other stakeholders involved in the reintegration process should be consulted in monitoring and evaluation processes. Methods of collecting information depend on the results expected, that is, impact assessment would involve research studies, while outcome and output results could utilise interviews, document reviews and discussions.

Evaluation on the other hand is a way that assesses the reintegration process through specific periods like midway and at the end of the process. Information gathered during the assessments, placement and post reintegration and if

⁴⁷ *Inter-Agency Group on children’s Reintegration, Guidelines on Children’s Reintegration, designed by Chasqui Design & Communications, 2016, p.34.*

reintegration was not possible is used during programme evaluation and influencing policy and practice. Data can reveal specific needs in children and highlight the success of programmes which can inform good practice or the need to scale-up interventions.

In summary a successful Reintegration include the following:

- Positive relationship of a child with the family and community
- Positive attitude of the family and community towards the child
- Welfare of the child improved including a sense of belonging
- Involvement and participation of the child in family and community activities.

The impact of Reintegration includes short term and long term elements to observe.

The short period of time;

- Whether reintegrated children have sufficient food with adequate nutrition,
- School admission and attendance, vocational training or safely employed and being provided with needed medical services including immunization and psychosocial support,
- Shelter and stability;
- Addressing actions which can result into ill-treatment, abuse or failure to provide adequate care;
- Child is seen to be accepted into the family and the wider community;
- Child is able to maintain a positive normal routine

The long term impact on the Child;

- Focus is on changes of behaviour; child development; mental health, including emotional well-being; physical health; attachment to parents and peer relationships;
- Children safely assimilated into their communities with cultural identity,
- Achievements in the education system
- Successful handling of chronic diseases.

Long term impact on the Family:

- Economic empowerment of the family - enhanced ability to meet family members' basic needs for food, clothing and shelter in a sustainable fashion,
- Improved child management and communication skills and family support,
- Housing issues and neighbourhood safety addressed.
- Ability to resolve conflicts,

Monitoring and evaluation of the reintegration guidelines will be implemented by individual professionals involved in the reintegration process, organisations, agencies and local government authorities implementing reintegration programmes and government at the ministerial level whose role is to monitor the functioning of overall policy and legal framework, effectiveness of resource investments, assess capacity of professionals and how reintegration is embedded within the overall child protection systems in the country. Monitoring and evaluation methods will include phone calls to stakeholders and field visits for face to face interviews and observations.

Indicators for monitoring and evaluation of child reintegration process

Effective Monitoring and Evaluation starts from the pre-reintegration process up to post-integration process. It has to be participatory by involving all key stakeholders such as: a child, family members, LGAs and community members. Collaboration with key stakeholders is essential in identifying changes in the child's behaviours and feeling of self-worthiness, have acquired skills, different language, change of negative attitudes and improved relationships with siblings. It is also important to collect information on the outputs of the direct interventions provided to a child during re-integration process. However, analysis of process indicators will provide basis for the evaluation of the success of the process.

The following table shows a guide on Monitoring and Evaluation of the reintegration Process:

Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation of reintegration Process

Child Stages	Reintegration	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
Identification, building and enrolment	relationship and enrolment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of children identified and enrolled - Number of children rescued and referred to temporary shelter, centres, fit persons, - Number of children willing to work with the Social Welfare officers/Social workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children placed into safety
Assessments and Planning	and Case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of children assessed - Number of families traced - Number of families assessed - Number community leaders assessed - Key findings identified - Number care plans developed and reviewed - Number reports prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All information in place - Care plans in place - Case management plan followed
Preparation of family and reintegration;	child, and community for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of home visits - Number of visits at the institutions - Number of sessions/ meetings - Number of resolutions agreed - Number of community leaders - Contacted - Number of families supported in economic strengthening - Number reports prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family and child reunification - Community readiness for reunification - Children demonstrate an increase in confidence and self-esteem - Children demonstrate improved positive behaviours

<p>Initiating contact between child and family;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of home visits - Number of calls - Observations of child and family positive interactions - Observations of community members readiness - Child and family ready for reunification - Number reports prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family and child readiness for reunification - Community readiness for reunification
<p>Reunification of the child with family;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of children reunified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children reunified in a safe family - Family and child readiness to work after reunification to complete plan
<p>Post-reunification support and follow up;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of follow up visits conducted - Continuation of implementing care plan - Number of sessions/ meetings conducted - Number of children enrolled back to school/ vocational skills training - Number of families supported in economic strengthening - Number of families linked to other service providers - Number reports prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children have positive relationships with their parents/carers - Children remain and feel safe in families - Children feel accepted in the communities including schools - Welfare of the child improved
<p>Case closure and/or transfer of the case.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of case successfully graduated and closed - Number of case files transferred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children live in safe families with improved relationship and positive behaviours - Families with improved socio-economic wellbeing

5.0 CONCLUSION

Family reintegration is an integral part of child protection, complex and requires professional ethics and capacity to collaborate effectively with the different stakeholders involved in the process. It is essential that practitioners working with children and their families increase in value, that provides the best outcomes in the long run for children who have been disadvantaged for a period in their lives.

Reintegration is not a one-shot kind of activity but a process that is implemented in a systematic and step-by-step manner and value must be added in every stage of the way with a clear motive. The value added in every step will safeguard the achievement in the process and avoid failures. It is not an over emphasis to say that the interest of the child and child rights are paramount. At the same time parents, families and communities are empowered to be able to meet their responsibilities in ensuring Tanzania becomes one of the best places for a child to live in.

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