

**UNICEF  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN  
RWANDA**



**TUBARERERE MU MURYANGYO!  
LET'S RAISE CHILDREN IN FAMILIES!  
CHILD CARE REFORM PROGRAMME**

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN



## I. BACKGROUND: CHILDREN WITHOUT APPROPRIATE FAMILY CARE

### 1.1 Situation analysis

#### a) *Orphans:*

Today, an estimated 700,000 orphans are living in Rwanda and between 13% and 15% of children under 18 have lost one or both parents, which enhances the risk to greater child vulnerability.

#### b) *Residence with biological parents:*

39% of Rwanda children under 18 do not live with both their parents. Of particular vulnerability are 24% of these children who are under 2 years of age and who are at special risk of being denied the care they need for their physical and psychosocial well-being. The 2005 DHS found that only 13% of households receiving orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) received free basic external support to care for the children. Moreover, a 2006 assessment undertaken in rural Rwanda showed that the percentage of food insecurity increased from a range of 44 % to 46% in households hosting one or two orphans, to 61% in households hosting three or more orphans.

#### c) *Children in institutions:*

In early 2012 3,323 children and young adults were living in registered orphanages. Decades of research have documented the harm of institutional care on children globally.<sup>1</sup> The situation of children aged under 3 years old is particularly concerning as institutionalization is most damaging in the first three years of a child's life. 11% of the children currently living in institutions are under the age of 3 years and 37.5% of the children were aged between 0-3 years at the time when they were placed into institutions. This situation illustrates a strong need for adequate preventive services for babies and young children.

### 1.2 Government's and partners' response:

#### a) *National Survey of institutions for children in Rwanda*

In 2011-2012, a **National Survey on Institutional Care** was conducted by MIGEPROF in partnership with *Hope and Homes for Children (HHC)* to obtain an accurate overview of the current institutional system and inform policy reform on child care.

The survey found that of the 3,323 institutionalized children, 55 per cent were boys and 45 per cent were girls supported through 600 staff in 19 districts. 31 per cent of the children in orphanages had lost both parents while more than 70 per cent had at least one parent or living relative. Six per cent of the primary caregivers of the institutionalized children had mental health problems and 3 per cent were in prison. At least 1,116 children were in contact with their parents and were regularly visited by relatives. The majority of children in orphanages originated from the areas where the institutions are located, which suggests that orphanages have a "pulling effect". Most institutions were managed by faith-based organizations and/or were funded by international private donors. The amount of their funding is mostly unknown.

#### b) *Pilot deinstitutionalization process through the closure of the Mpore Pefa orphanage*

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<sup>1</sup> "Families, Not Orphanages," John Williamson and Aaron Greenberg, September 2010, Better Care Network; "The Development and Care of Institutionally Reared Children," The Leiden Conference on the Development and Care of Children without Permanent Parents

The Government of Rwanda is strongly committed to closing orphanages, reintegrating children safely into family-based environments and building a strengthened child protection system. In 2012, it initiated the pilot closure of the Mpore Pefa Orphanage and the reintegration of 51 children with professional assistance in partnership with *Hope and Homes for Children (HHC)*.

*c) Strategy for National Child Care Reform*

On March 16, 2012 Rwandan Cabinet of Ministers endorsed a landmark **Strategy for National Child Care Reform** document, the strategy foresees to close down and transform all orphanages as an entry point to building sustainable child care and protection systems and it details how children living in institutions should regain their right to live in a loving, safe and supportive family environment.

The newly established National Commission for Children was then tasked to oversee the successful reintegration of children, the creation of a system of alternative care and the transition towards a strengthened child protection system.

*d) National Programme for implementing the Strategy: the Tubarerere Mu Muryango! programme*

Following the adoption of the child care reform Strategy, the NCC and UNICEF developed a multi-donor proposal designed as a comprehensive programme implementation document ensuring that critical linkages between the child care reform process

and the strengthening of the national child protection system are established at the very start of the implementation phase.

## **II. OVERALL GOAL, STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND KEY ACTIONS OF THE TUBARERERE MU MUYRANGO! PROGRAMME**

The overall goal of the '*Tubarerere Mu Muryango!*' programme is to implement the national strategy on child care reform through the creation of a national alternative care system whereby children are returned from residential institutions to family and community care and to ensure that Rwandan children have access to, and are supported by, a strengthened child protection system using deinstitutionalization and alternative care mechanisms as an entry point.

The programme aims at contributing to the fulfillment of the following strategic objectives:

### **1. Build and enhance the capacity of the NCC to lead a National Child Care Reform and coordinate a functioning Child Protection System**

**Key actions:**

- Operationalizing the legislative and policy framework for child care reform: standards for children's institutions
- Creating a national framework for alternative care: Revision of guidelines on alternative care and adoption

### **2. Strengthen the capacity to deliver and coordinate child care services at decentralized levels**

**Key actions:**

- Building a strong professional social welfare workforce: 68 trained social workers and psychologists
- assisted by community-based child care volunteers at grass roots level

### **3. Strengthen the family unit for reintegration, resilience and prevention through social protection**

**Key actions:**

- Providing of tailored child and family reintegration packages and support (education, health, psychosocial support, awareness and sensitization on child protection-related issues)

- Establishing Systematic linkages to existing social protection schemes
- Investing in community-based networks and facilities to prevent child abandonment and ensure child protection basic services and sensitization

#### **4. Ensure sustainability for national child care and strengthen the child protection system**

##### **Key actions:**

- Establishing District Child and Social Protection Units at District level
- Integrating Child Care work into University Curriculum
- Introducing a new cadre of professional social workers and psychologists into civil service

#### **5. Enhance data and strategic knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation**

##### **Key actions:**

- Developing efficient Information Management on child protection, Monitoring and Evaluation systems
- Piloting the use of modern technology (rapid sms) for real time child care and protection monitoring
- Developing South-South cooperation and exchanges and building a Community of practice around child care with countries in the Eastern and Southern African Region.

Over the long term, a **sustained response to building the child protection system** is envisaged, which would be supported by the Government of Rwanda through a national fiscal, human and physical resource investment to meet the needs of vulnerable children. As such, continuous linkages will be made to the current and next Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS II) which outlines Rwanda's development goals.

### **III. TARGET POPULATION AND EXPECTED RESULTS**

- An estimated 3,323 children residing in 33 orphanages in 19 Districts
- An estimated 300 children that have been deinstitutionalized in the 19 districts
- An estimated 3,000 hosting families that will benefit from social assistance services including social work and psychosocial support
- An estimated 1,000 foster care givers
- An estimated 150 emergency foster care givers (families or individuals)
- District Child And Social Service Units in established all 30 Districts
- 68 public civil servants (34 social workers and 34 psychologists) with capacity enhanced in alternative care provision at sub-national level
- An estimated 2,000 community-based child care workers providing first hand support to families