

Family-Based Care for Every Child: Lessons from 30 years and the Road Ahead



Save the Children

A photograph of four school children in a classroom. In the foreground, a girl is focused on painting a picture of a deer on a piece of paper. Behind her, another girl is laughing heartily, holding a small object in her hand. To her right, a boy is also laughing, and further back, another boy is looking towards the right. They are all wearing white school uniforms. The classroom has wooden desks and a whiteboard in the background.

Where did we come from?



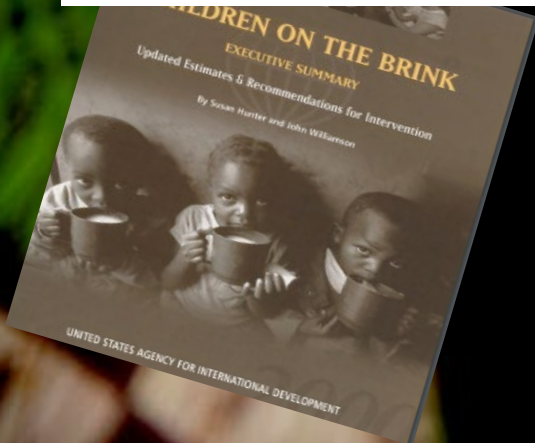


MANAGING UGANDA'S ORPHANS CRISIS

“Uganda is in the first stages of an orphan crisis whose dimensions and duration are quite uncertain...”

“Government should resist institutionalizing children and strongly discourage the establishment of new facilities.”

“families and communities are the first line of response and they are coping with the overwhelming majority of cases of orphaned children”

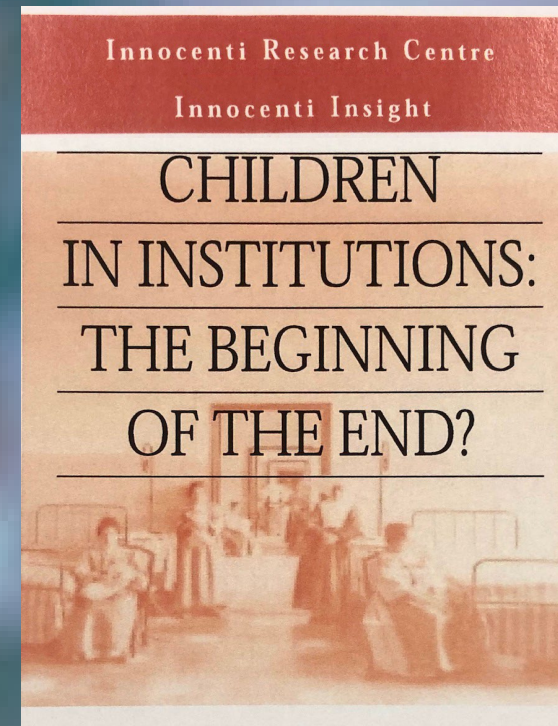
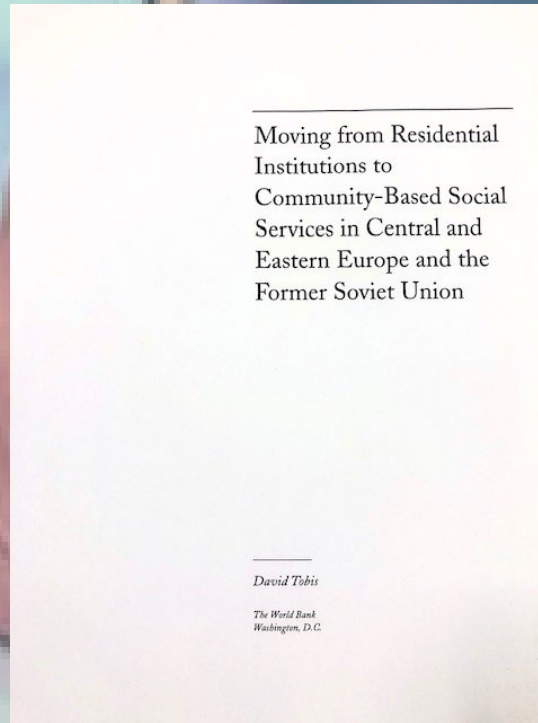
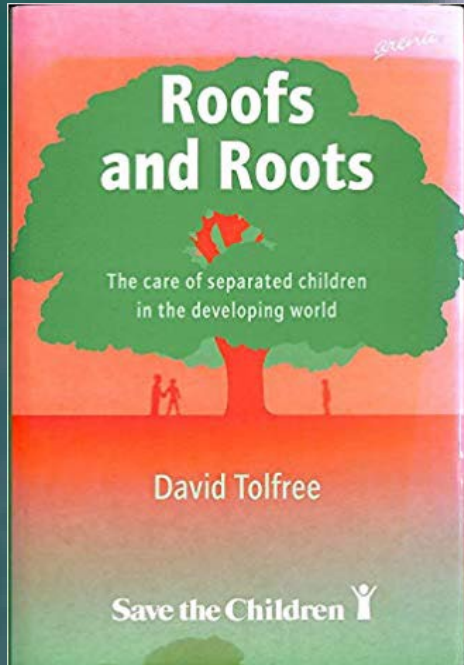


“Well intentioned but inappropriate interventions from outside groups can undermine the effectiveness of family responses by taking on the primary responsibility of the care of orphaned children”





“6 to 8 million children
in institutional care”



**“We have families with multiple problems; But there is no
alternative to families”**

– 1993 NGO Forum launching the International Year of the Family

A woman wearing a white hijab and red Everlast boxing gloves is looking directly at the camera. She is standing in a gym with a red wall and a white ceiling. The background is slightly blurred, showing some equipment and a bright light source.

Where are we now and what have we learned?

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE
&
UNICEF

IMPROVING PROTECTION FOR
CHILDREN WITHOUT PARENTAL CARE

A Call for International Standards

A JOINT WORKING PAPER

August 2004

UNICEF
Child Protection Unit
3 UN Plaza, H7A
New York, NY 10017 USA
www.unicef.org

International Social Service
General Secretariat
Quai du Seujet 32
1201 Geneva, Switzerland
www.iss-ssi.org



On the 20th of November 2009, the UN General Assembly welcomed the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children

روى الاطفال الدولية

رئيسة الجمعية

Seventy-fourth session
Agenda item 69 (a)
Promotion and protection of the rights of children:
promotion and protection of the rights of children

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
on 18 December 2019

74/133. Rights of the child

The General Assembly,
Reaffirming the importance of its resolution 46/25 of 20 November 1989, by which it adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child,¹ which constitutes the standard in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, and welcoming the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary in 2019 of its adoption,
Reaffirming also that States parties to the Convention shall undertake all appropriate measures for the implementation of the rights recognized therein, while having in mind the importance of the Optional Protocols to the Convention² and calling for their universal ratification and effective implementation, as well as that of other human rights instruments,

Recalling all the previous resolutions on the rights of the child, the most recent of which was resolution 73/137 of 17 December 2018, and recalling also all other relevant resolutions on the rights of the child, including resolution 73/124 of 17 December 2018, in providing children with help and assistance,³ and resolution 73/127 of 17 December 2018, which declared 2021 the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour,⁴

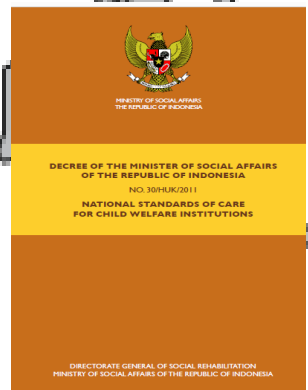
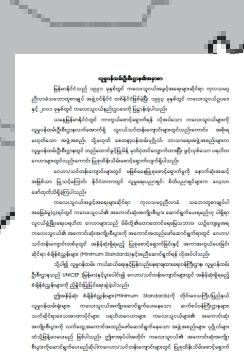
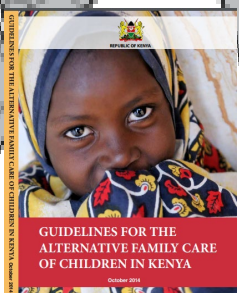
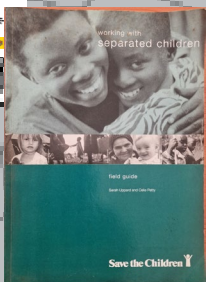
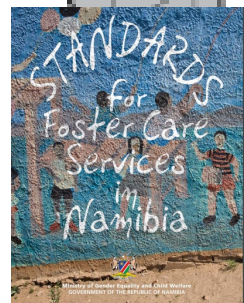
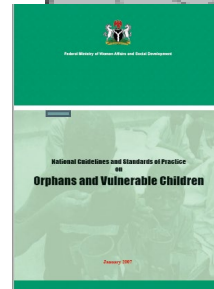
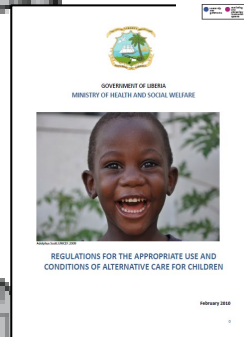
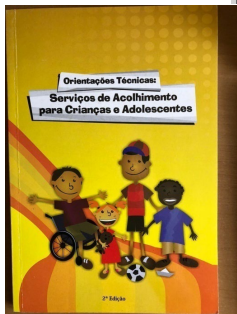
Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁵ which proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration without distinction of any kind,

Recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,⁶ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,⁷ the Convention on

¹ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1173, No. 27531.
² Ibid., nos. 271 and 275, No. 27531, and resolution 54/134, annex.
³ Resolution 73/132.
⁴ See resolution 73/134, annex.



“We know that children thrive best in families and communities, not in orphanages and institutions that are not providing the love and care every child needs. The EU plays a key role in ensuring that no child is left behind”
- Neven Mimica
European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development



MOVING FORWARD: Implementing the 'Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children'



In association with

OAK FOUNDATION

unicef

Supported by

USAID



International Inter-Agency MOOC offers free training
Join international colleagues

Getting Care Right for All Children: Implementing the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children



All around the world, for many different reasons, hundreds of thousands of children cannot live with their parents. The UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children set out the principles for policy and practice that have been agreed upon globally, to help towards tackling this issue.

Now it's your turn to take part in this free massive online open course (MOOC), which delivers into what the UN Guidelines look like in practice. It is available in English, French and Spanish.

By the end of this 6 week interactive course you'll better understand the key principles, pillars and implications of the UN Guidelines, taking in views from across the world. Open to all, the course is for everyone interested in or responsible for children's care.

The course starts on 1 October 2018 - don't miss your chance to take part!

BOOK NOW

- Some key facts:
 - course runs for six weeks in total
 - each weekly module contains around two hours of online learning with an optional two hours of ready
 - each week you can stop / start the course any time
 - weekly modules can be completed at your convenience

The International Inter-agency group commissioned CELCIS, based in the University of Strathclyde, to develop the MOOC, which will be delivered through FutureLearn, the social learning platform.



Caring for Children Moving Alone:

PROTECTING UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN



STARTS 2nd
SEPTEMBER
2019

Over 12,000 participants from over 140 countries have learnt how to offer the best possible alternative care, protection and support to the thousands of unaccompanied and separated children on the move.

Join thousands more for the second run of an innovative, free training course produced by CELCIS, at the University of Strathclyde with strategic advice and review of course content by Harvard EVB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University as well as a number of advisors and contributors.

Backed by 16 leading international humanitarian and children's rights organizations, the course is informed by the expertise and experience of young people, professionals, volunteers, and academics.

This new, free, six-week online course is now available to anyone with a responsibility for responding to the care and protection needs of unaccompanied and separated children and young people.

Learners will be able to share ideas and examples of practice with other learners across the world. Front line professionals and volunteers including humanitarian workers, social workers, teachers, border staff and migration officers, lawyers and medical workers, sign up today!

Available in English, Spanish, French and Arabic.
Further information: Travis.Brown@strath.ac.uk, Travis.Brown@strath.ac.uk
via Facebook, or: www.facebook.com/CELCIS

www.futurelearn.com/courses/caring-for-children-moving-alone
#F4ChildrenMovingAlone



Future Learn



Family first

Prioritising support to kinship carers,
especially older carers

HelpAge
International
age helps

Positive care choices:
Working paper 4

EveryChild.

MAKING DECISIONS FOR THE BETTER CARE OF CHILDREN

The role of gatekeeping in
strengthening family-based care
and reforming alternative care systems

Country Case Studies

5



Better
Care
Network

unicef
unite for children

with financial support from
USAID

PEPFAR

PREPARATION FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

16-18 CHILDREN'S
MILLAGES
Working paper

BIEFING PAPER 2



MAY 2019

Measuring the Implementation of the
'Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children'

What are the Guidelines?

In 2009, the UN General Assembly endorsed the *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*, which provide authoritative guidance on the implementation of the provisions of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and other international standards relevant to children's care.

Two basic principles underpin the provision of alternative care for children: the *Necessity Principle* (ensure that alternative care for an individual child is genuinely needed) and the *Suitability Principle* (ensure that alternative care is provided in an appropriate manner for an individual child).

Q1
Is care genuinely needed?

Q2
Is the care appropriate for the child?

What is the Tracking Progress Tool?

The Tool is a free, web-based, interactive diagnostic and learning tool designed to enable national actors (governments, children's service providers, NGOs, civil society, academics and others) to determine the extent to which their country has effectively implemented the *Guidelines* and to identify the priorities for change still ahead.

How was the Tool developed?

The tool was developed by an inter-agency group in consultation with a range of actors working on care reforms at national, regional, and global levels. It is currently available in English and Spanish and other language versions are planned.



with support from

OAK FOUNDATION



MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHILD PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

2019 Edition



Strategies for delivering safe and effective foster care

A review of the evidence for
those designing and delivering
foster care programmes

Family
for every child



Kinship Care report Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan



Save the Children Research Initiative: Understanding Kinship care of Syrian
Refugee Children Living in Jordan.
Implemented with support of Information and Research Center - King Hussein Foundation

Child Protection Initiative, March 2015



Violence Against Children in All Care Settings: Africa Expert Consultation



June 21-22, 2017
Nairobi, Kenya



ALTERNATIVE CARE IN EMERGENCIES TOOLKIT



Global Protection Cluster
and partners

RESCUE

World Vision

Save the Children



In Brazil, gatekeeping mechanisms contributed to a 50% reduction in the use of residential care and poverty no longer being the primary reason for children being placed into alternative care.

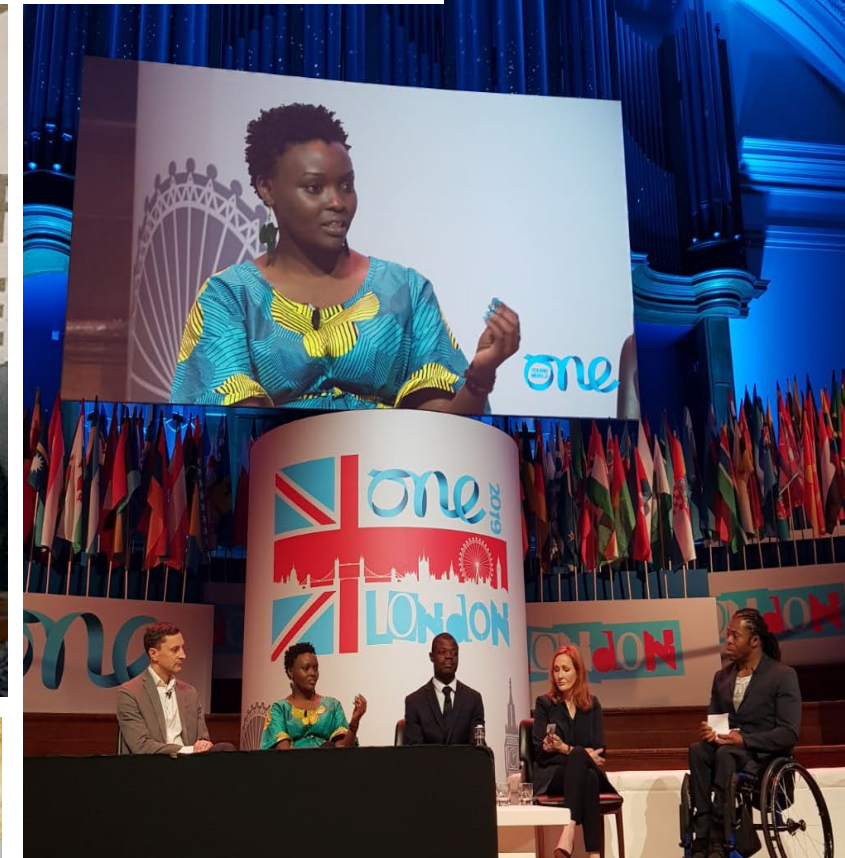
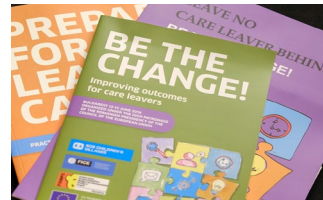






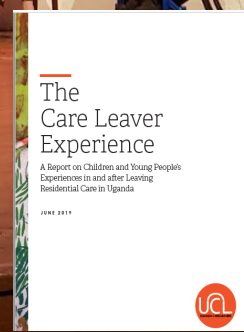
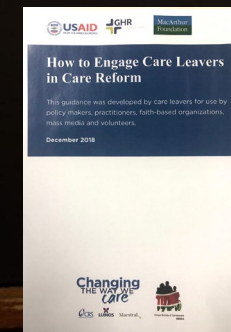
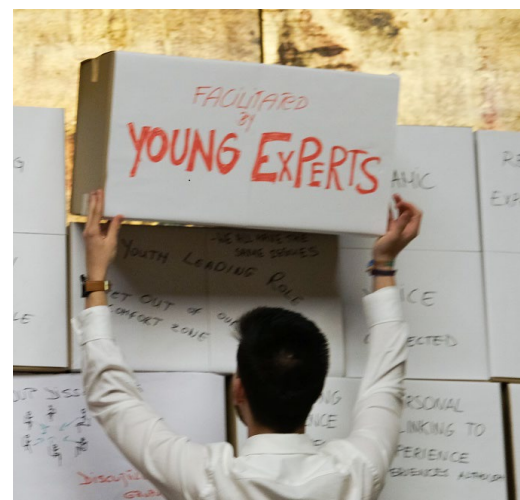
“Tell my story so that you will be empowered to make change, but always remember it is my story to tell.”

-Excerpt from “Key messages care leavers want you to know” Kenyan Society of Care Leavers



“I come from a standing point that every child should be involved in all decisions that influence its life in any way.”

*– Dusica Lozanovska
13 years old, Macedonia*





Policy paper

Global Charter on Children's Care Reform

Updated 2 October 2025

"These are the moments I am incredibly grateful and appreciative of to be able to use my platform to shine a light on the care system that means so much to me and I can only hope to help improve it"

– Barry Keoghan



"The best thing my wife and I ever did, along with having our 2 boys, was adopt our beautiful daughter. Nothing compares to the happiness and meaning she has given to our lives.

Every child deserves a loving and safe family environment where they can thrive and get the best start in life. Too many children are facing a life of neglect and abuse in harmful institutions such as orphanages, which do not have children's best interest at heart.

I am proud to drive this global campaign alongside Barry, who has first-hand experience of growing up in the care system.

Global care reform is not only the right thing to do but will have transformative impacts on economic and social development – delivering our Plan for Change."

– Foreign Secretary David Lammy



Where are we going?



Mima ma mi ma
Tita ti ta
Mina na ni na
da da di du de
lola
li li le
boba bi

bata dia b boba bi
iba, ebi, ebu, ebe, baba
mba, bata, dda, bula, le

République démocratique du Congo
Pratique du
Français



Definitions and Data



The
DHS  **Program**
Demographic and Health Surveys





DIGITAL DIALOGUE: FROM ANNOUNCEMENT TO ACTION
PARENTING & CAREGIVER SUPPORT

27 AUGUST 2025



unicef | for every child



**Designing, implementing,
evaluating, and scaling up
parenting interventions**

A handbook for decision-makers
and implementers





Family
for every child

How to support

KINSHIP care

Lessons learnt from
around the world



***“Not until we
restore the right to
family for every
child will we truly
leave no one
behind”***

- Ruth Wacuka
Kenyan Society of Care
Leavers

***“La protection de l’enfant est une priorité pour tous. Car tout enfant sans
protection est exposé à différentes sortes de problèmes. Il a besoin et a droit
pour sa protection et son développement harmonieux.***

***C’est pour cela, je dis : « Un enfant, une famille, une communauté, un pays
pour un monde durable ! »***

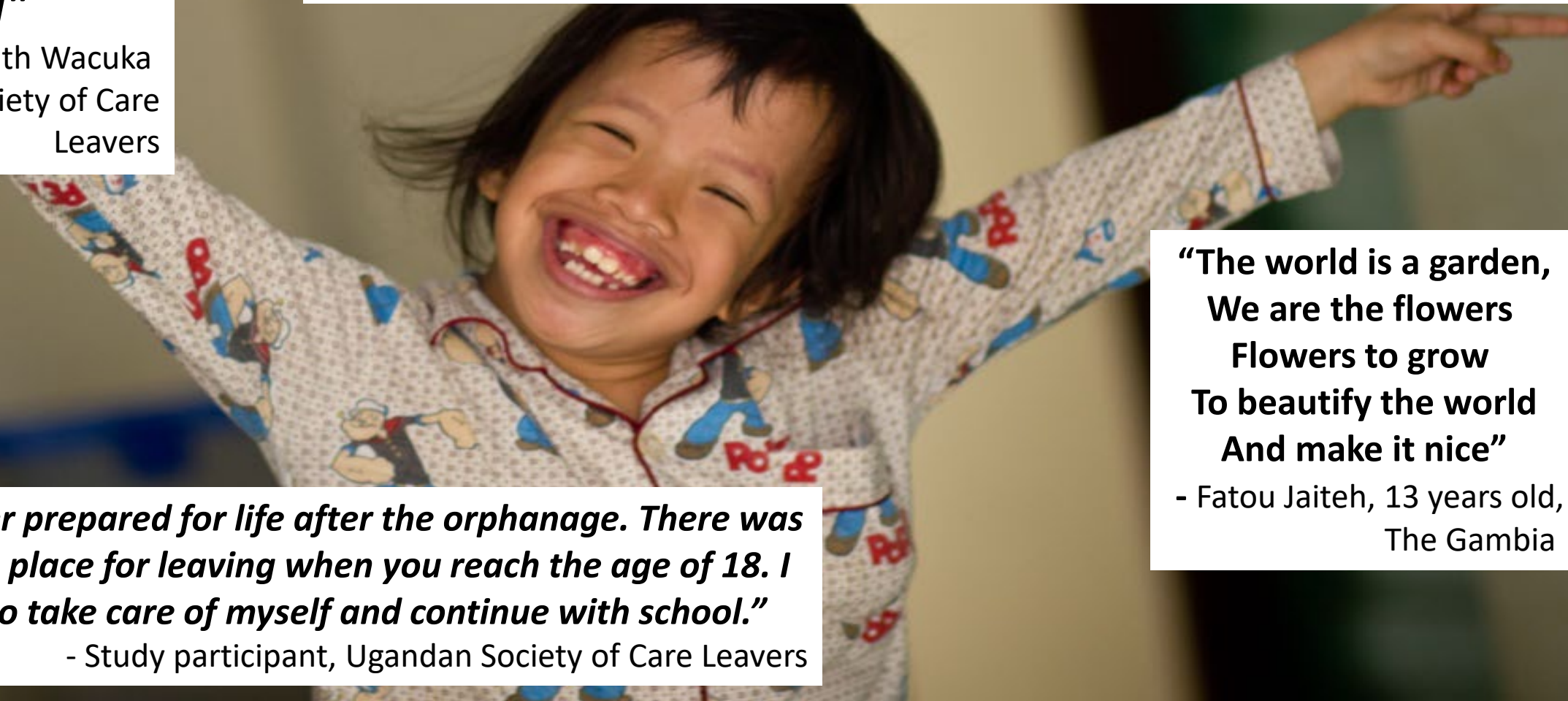
- Agnès Tempè , 13 ans, Bénin

***“...I was never prepared for life after the orphanage. There was
no system in place for leaving when you reach the age of 18. I
struggled to take care of myself and continue with school.”***

- Study participant, Ugandan Society of Care Leavers

***“The world is a garden,
We are the flowers
Flowers to grow
To beautify the world
And make it nice”***

- Fatou Jaiteh, 13 years old,
The Gambia



Additional Resources

- [Summary about the 2019 UN Resolution on the Rights of the Child by the Better Care Network](#)
- [Global Charter on Children's Care Reform - GOV.UK](#)
- [Global Social Service Workforce Alliance](#)
- [WHO guidelines on parenting interventions to prevent maltreatment and enhance parent-child relationships with children aged 0-17 years.](#)
- Information about [Global Kinship Care Week](#): Family for Every Child
- [Guidance on Kinship Care](#): Family for Every Child

Additional Links Shared in Live Chat

Kenya Society of Care Leavers: <https://youtu.be/8mvaNcunYeM>

The Better Care Network has a great summary of the work on the Day of General Discussion - with short videos at the end of the page: [CRC Day of General Discussion \(DGD\) 2021 | Better Care Network](#)

Transforming Children's Care: <https://www.transformcare4children.org/>