



## GENERAL POINTS



- The paper underscores the need for an enhanced evidence base to inform assessment and early interventions.
- New research should be closely tied to operational and policy needs identified by relevant communities of practice.

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING POLICY



1. Create policy and program space to develop initiatives that focus explicitly on strengthening families, preventing family separation and facilitating protective family reintegration and reunification.
2. Support lower- and middle-income countries to shift systems for alternative care away from institutional care toward family-based care. Recognize that any child under age three in need of care should be placed in family care, not in an institution. Family care is also preferable for older children and adolescents, whenever possible.

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING POLICY



3. Endorse and adhere to internationally recognized guidance, including the *UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*, the *Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children* and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.
4. Establish mechanisms to facilitate coordinated policy, program and research agenda to encourage learning across communities of practice.

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING POLICY



5. Ensure that children's voices are heard and respected when policies are written, programs implemented and research conducted.

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PRACTICE



1. Ensure that all assessment and early response interventions actively prevent family-child separation. Identify, assess and address the needs of highly vulnerable families as well as children outside of family care as a preventive strategy.
2. Develop coordinated child protection ethical surveillance or information management systems to quickly identify children outside of family care, monitor child protection concerns and facilitate timely and effective responses. Learn from and build upon good practices employed in the child protection, health and nutrition sectors, where effective survey, surveillance and reporting mechanisms have been developed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PRACTICE



3. Promote coordinated, comprehensive short-term and long-term gender-sensitive assessments to effectively identify and address the holistic and developmental needs of children outside of family care, including family tracing and reunification, shelter, food and nutrition, health, psychosocial support, education and access to livelihood.
4. Facilitate effective linkages between immediate and longer-term assistance to avoid gaps in the provision of assistance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PRACTICE



5. Develop and strengthen the capacity of the national and community level social welfare workforce to identify, assess and respond to the needs of vulnerable families and children and reinforce national and community-based child protection systems.

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING RESEARCH



1. Prioritize studies on the root causes of family separation and effective interventions to prevent family separation and secondary separation.
2. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of living outside of family care, considering the interplay between cumulative exposure to risks and protective factors.

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING RESEARCH



3. Support research on the long-term consequences of residential care for those who have grown up in such facilities (e.g. orphanages, children's institutions, children's homes, children's villages).
4. Carry on contextualized child centered studies on the outcomes for children out of family care who benefited from different interventions to provide alternative care.

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING RESEARCH



5. Examine the reasons behind the proliferation of institutional care, despite well-documented shortcomings and the lower cost of family-based alternatives.