

# IN THE BLIND SPOT



Documenting the situation  
of children without parental care  
or at risk of losing it

*The family is the fundamental group  
of society and the natural environment  
for the growth and well-being of all its  
members, in particular children*

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



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# Executive summary

In 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, with the basic rationale that “*Every child and young person should live in a supportive, protective and caring environment that promotes his/her full potential. Children with inadequate or no parental care are at special risk of being denied such a nurturing environment.*” Early experiences and the environments in which children develop during their earliest years can have a lasting impact on their lives, and the more risks they are subjected to, the higher is the negative impact on their development.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the milestones of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been reached, and children in general have their rights fulfilled to a higher degree than before. However, even with an equity focus,<sup>2</sup> and children being at the centre of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the next 15 years, children without parental care or at risk of losing it might continue to fall behind.

The main reasons are 1) the blackboxing of “vulnerable children”, where there is a lack of definition and documentation concerning what constitutes the particular vulnerabilities for each individual child; 2) The documentation of causes and consequences of losing parental care is scarce<sup>3</sup>; 3) Targets, monitoring and evaluations are focused on singular issues, which may jeopardize a more holistic approach to analysis and interventions that would benefit children’s development. The use of household surveys means that children who are without parental care, and are not part of a household, become invisible in policies and interventions and for statistical purposes. Failing to understand their situation, and to provide adequate support to families at risk of breaking down and children who have lost the *supportive, protective and caring environment that promotes his/her full potential* that all children have a right to, can result in stalling the development or even reversing the achievements of the last 15 years.<sup>4</sup>

Investing in the most disadvantaged children, giving them the possibility to develop in a nurturing environment to their full potential, can give a return on investment of up to US\$4-10 for every US\$1 invested. Giving every child the possibility to reach their full potential, they can contribute

to the development of countries and continents for future generations. In particular, it has been found that investing in early childhood programmes for the youngest children from low-income families have the highest return on investment. Such programmes can lead to benefits later in life in terms of cognition, language, socio-emotional health, education, and the labour market<sup>5</sup> and hold the promise of overcoming social disadvantages and breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty.<sup>6</sup>

A common myth suggests that children without parental care are mostly orphans and living in institutions. However, the opposite is true: more than 80 % of children living in institutions have one or both parents alive,<sup>7</sup> most of the children entering SOS care in 2014 were not orphans,<sup>8</sup> and the same is true for the majority of children in street situations.<sup>9</sup> Children without parental care may be found among child workers, children in street situations, in elderly-led or child-headed households, in kinship or community care, in foster families, residential facilities and institutions, they may be on the move, in armies or guerrillas, in marriages or as mothers, amongst victims of trafficking, sexual exploitation or in organised crime networks. The two characteristics most of them have in common are 1) the complex multitude of rights violations that contribute to 2) a high risk of further rights violations, where these children lose their potential to participate in and be productive members of society.

In 2009, at least 24 million children lived without parental care – 1 % of the global child population.<sup>10</sup> In 2015, 220 million children – every 10<sup>th</sup> child – lived without parental care or were at risk of losing parental care.<sup>11</sup> The web of rights violations can be described as: Poverty and insufficient income, poor health or death of one or both parents, socio-cultural factors such as single parenthood and early marriage, psychosocial factors, violence and abuse, and political and economic factors such as war, conflict and natural

1 Harvard University, Centre of the Developing Child ‘Five numbers to remember about early childhood development’ 2009  
2 UNICEF For every child a fair chance 2015  
3 USAID et al. ‘Household Economic Strengthening in Support of Prevention of Family-Child Separation and Children’s Reintegration in Family Care’ 2015  
4 UNICEF ‘For every child a fair chance’ 2015

5 IEG Working paper 2015/3 ‘Later impacts of Early Childhood Interventions: A Systematic Review’ and ACPF ‘The African Report on Child Wellbeing: Budgeting for Children’ 2010  
6 <https://iege.worldbankgroup.org/evaluations/wb-support-early-childhood-development>  
7 Save the Children ‘Keeping children out of harmful institutions’ 2009  
8 SOS CVI ‘The Situation of SOS Children’s Villages Target Group’, 2015: both Family Strengthening Programmes and Family-based care  
9 UN OHRC ‘Protection and promotion of the rights of children working and/or living on the street’ (2012)  
10 Every Child ‘Missing: children without parental care in international development policy’ 2010  
11 SOS CVI ‘Situation of SOS Children’s Villages Target Group’ 2015



emergencies. With adequate support and child protection systems in place, many of these causes could be eliminated.<sup>12</sup>

Across the 12 countries prioritised in Norwegian development aid,<sup>13</sup> the documentation on children without parental care or at risk of losing it varies considerably. For some countries, virtually no information can be found regarding children's situation in general; others have not reported since before the year 2000, or they do not report on indicators that are vital for assessing children's well-being. As a result, the situation for children in general in some of these countries, like Haiti, Myanmar, Ethiopia and Tanzania, and for children without parental care or at risk of losing it in particular, is unknown. The regional and even national variations call for context-specific interventions and policies.

Almost all countries in the world have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and many have legislation in place. Even so, it seems legislation is often unconsolidated, uncoordinated, fragmented, poorly enforced and underfunded.<sup>14</sup> There are low levels of investment in children in general, and in child protection and prevention mechanisms in particular, as well as in child-sensitive justice, support, report and complaint mechanisms.<sup>15</sup> The causes are often identified as **weak leadership** in terms of implementation of legislation, planning and coordination; **low financial and human resources** set aside for appropriate care for children; and **lack of data and information** to inform evidence-based planning and policy-making.<sup>16</sup> Where interventions are implemented, lack of knowledge and understanding of their situation means the effect on this particular target group might be low.<sup>17</sup>

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12 UNICEF 'For every child a fair chance' 2015

13 Afghanistan, Haiti, Mali, State of Palestine, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Malawi, Myanmar, Nepal, Tanzania and Mozambique

14 UN 'Towards a World Free from Violence' 2013

15 Ibid: Only 24 % of the countries responding had financial or human resources allocated to address violence against children

16 SOS CVI et al. 'Drumming together for change' 2014

17 See Annex 1 for an overview of the data collected for the 12 countries

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**To ensure that children’s right to a nurturing upbringing is fulfilled, giving them the possibility to develop to reach their full potential and to contribute towards sustainable development as full members of society, further efforts are needed to place children’s rights at the centre of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, governance and funding.**

## **1 In-depth knowledge on the child population, in particular vulnerabilities, and national policy frameworks is essential for targeted individual and global development initiatives:**

International bodies and donor countries should demand that countries with which they cooperate provide in-depth knowledge of their child population; Where such knowledge does not exist, fund knowledge-gathering in this area; Make data collection on children a top priority in bi- and multilateral cooperation, making sure that no groups are forgotten; Ensure that they themselves have sound knowledge of the child population and national policy frameworks before providing support, cooperation and funding; Make certain that interventions are knowledge-based, and that all children are reached; Support UNICEF and UN Member States in collecting evidence on children’s well-being.

## **2 Coordinated efforts and long-term, knowledge-based policies are key to end multiple rights violations against children:**

International organisations and policy-makers must coordinate their efforts in policy- and guidance development, data collection and interventions, and place children’s right to a nurturing upbringing to the heart of bi- and multilateral cooperation and policy-making at global, regional and national level; With a special focus on sustainable and long-term goals and funding and knowledge-based interventions, making global goals and commitments into concrete actions must be made a top priority for all stakeholders: supporting legislative reviews in views of fulfilling children’s rights; provision of universal and free basic services and birth registration; accountable alternative care options; support to families; early childhood development programmes; employment opportunities; and engaging local communities, families and children in policy-development and implementation.

## **3 Placing children at the centre of “good governance” from global to local level:**

All stakeholders should place children’s rights and needs at the forefront of advocacy and policy-development; Before receiving political support, funding, collaboration or interventions, governments should provide evidence that they have in-depth knowledge of children’s situation, with particular attention to children without parental care or at risk of losing it, relevant legislation, policies and funding or that there are concrete plans for developing such structures; Target and measure successful implementation of initiatives, legislation, policies, and interventions in terms of qualitative outcome for individual children, rather than (just) quantitative outcomes for the national government, external donor or global community, where special attention should be given to children without parental care, who might be accounted for and therefore risk losing out of interventions on singular issues.

## **4 Further quantitative and qualitative research is needed on the situation of children without parental care or at risk of losing it:**

While the aim of this report has been to provide documentation on the situation for children without parental care and reflecting on the international attention these groups of children receives, this report only scratches the surface. Further research is needed on: The particular vulnerabilities of children without parental care or at risk of losing parental care, where the Norwegian government should fund and ensure such information exists for the 12 focus countries and other countries which receive funding and support; Analysing existing statistical information, linking parameters to get more information on relevant vulnerabilities; Examining the role that international institutions and external governmental and non-governmental donors and service providers play in fulfilling children’s rights, where Norway should evaluate the effect of their own policies and interventions; Coordinated investigation into the global implementation of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in Member States.



# 1 | Introduction

**The family is the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members, in particular children**

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most rapidly and widely ratified international human rights treaty in history, placing the family at the centre of children's development. A nurturing caregiver is considered the most important factor in a child's development of cognitive, physical and emotional skills, giving them the absolute best possibilities to thrive and reach their full potential. Early experiences and the environments in which children develop during their earliest years can have a lasting impact on their lives, and the more risks they are subjected to, the higher is the impact on child development.<sup>18</sup> Children without parental care are in general considered more vulnerable than children in a family.

<sup>18</sup> Harvard University, Centre of the Developing Child 'Five numbers to remember about early childhood development' 2009

In 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. The Guidelines are recommendations to governments for fulfilling the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 20. The basic rationale behind the Guidelines is that "every child and young person should live in a supportive, protective and caring environment that promotes his/her full potential. Children with inadequate or no parental care are at special risk of being denied such a nurturing environment."<sup>19</sup> Children without parental care are defined as "*all children not in the overnight care of at least one of their parents, for whatever reason and under whatever circumstances*", a definition that will be used throughout this report.

Although it is generally acknowledged that the root causes of children losing parental care are a complex set of multiple rights violations, and that the consequences of losing parental care can be detrimental to a child's development

<sup>19</sup> UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children 2009

both in the short and the long term, their situation as a whole appears poorly documented.<sup>20</sup>

SOS Children's Villages (SOS CVI) have worked with providing alternative care for children since 1949, and now reach almost 2.3 million people across 135 countries with care, education, health services and emergency response.<sup>21</sup> They estimate that 220 million children – **every 10<sup>th</sup> child - live without parental care or are at risk of losing it.**<sup>22</sup> The NGO Missing Children UK in 2009 estimated that there were, at the very least, **24 million children living without parental care, or 1 % of the world's child population.**<sup>23</sup> **150 million children worldwide have lost one or both parents.**<sup>24</sup> However, while some of these overall estimates exist, the real number of children living without parental care appears unknown due to lack of knowledge of their situation. Furthermore, the root causes of losing parental care and the consequences for these children, who are deprived of the “supportive, protective and caring environment that promotes his/her full potential”, are not well known.

They may be found among child workers, children in street situations, in elderly-led or child-headed households, in kinship or community care, in foster families, residential facilities and institutions, they may be on the move, in armies or guerrillas, in marriages or as mothers, amongst victims of trafficking, sexual exploitation or in organised crime networks. The two characteristics most of them have in common are

- 1) the complex multitude of rights violations that contribute to
- 2) a high risk of further rights violations, where these children lose their potential to participate in and be productive members of society.

During the last 15 years, the global community has worked to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).<sup>25</sup> Children in general and vulnerable children in particular are at the centre of the UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)<sup>26</sup> for the next 15 years.

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20 USAID et al. 'Household Economic Strengthening in Support of Prevention of Family-Child Separation and Children's Reintegration in Family Care' 2015

21 SOS CVI 'Facts and figures' 2014

22 SOS CVI 'Situation of SOS Children's Villages Target Group' 2015

23 Every Child 'Missing: children without parental care in international development policy' 2010

24 SOS CVI 'Situation of SOS Children's Villages Target Group' 2015

25 <http://mdgs.un.org>

26 In the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, children rights and children in vulnerable families and situations are of utmost importance. The Member States will “strive to provide children and youth with a nurturing environment for the full realisation of their rights and capabilities”, including providing cohesive communities and families (Art 25). The goals include implementing social protection systems for all, including for the poor and the vulnerable.

However, what constitutes “the most vulnerable children” remains largely undefined.

Understanding the causes and consequences of losing the “supportive, protective and caring environment that promotes his/her full potential”, for the individual child and for society, is urgent for reaching the SDGs. While children in general have had their rights fulfilled to a higher degree than before, the most vulnerable children continue to fall behind.<sup>27</sup> Only with a good knowledge-base can the international development community provide adequate support to families at risk of breaking down and children who have lost parental care. Failing to provide these children with adequate measures can result in stalling or even reversing the development that one has achieved during the last 15 years. Investing in the most disadvantaged children, on the other hand, giving them the possibility to develop in a nurturing environment to their full potential, can give a return on investment of up to US\$4-10 for every US\$1 invested.<sup>28</sup>

## To document a lack of documentation

The main purpose of this report is to contribute to a more complete picture of the situation for children without parental care or at risk of losing it. In particular, investigates whether documentation is available or not, and whether these children are amongst the target groups of Norwegian and international development policies. This report attempts to provide more knowledge about the following issues:

- What are the root causes and consequences of living without parental care?
- What are the potential benefits of investing and the potential consequences of failing to invest in these children?
- How are the UN Guidelines and alternative care provisions in line with the Guidelines implemented?
- How do the international community and the Norwegian government invest in this group of children?

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27 UNICEF 'For every child a fair chance' 2015

28 Investments in deprived children is the topic of Chapter 4



The UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF)<sup>32</sup> and the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child (referred to as the CR Committee, not to be confused with the UN Convention of the Child, UNCRC)<sup>33</sup> periodic review reports and conclusions have been taken into account, as well as country-specific policies and strategies. To understand the situation for children without parental care and at risk of losing it, a wide range of sources have been taken into consideration.

## Limitations

Certain factors have limited the depth and scope of the analyses in this report:

- 1) This report does not represent a complete picture of the vulnerabilities associated with losing parental care, nor a complete picture of how the children without parental care and families at risk of breakdown are targeted by different organisations and national and local authorities. The different issues discussed in this report are all complex and separate research areas, in which the author neither has complete nor in-depth knowledge. In addition, time constraints have made it impossible to span all relevant sources.
- 2) There are a number of challenges related to the statistical information:
  - The term “vulnerable children” is most commonly used, but in most cases without definition.<sup>34</sup> Where they exist, definitions depend on the issue at hand or the settings where the children are.
  - CData collection and statistical information are often based on household surveys.<sup>35</sup> However, children without parental care or at risk of losing it are in many cases not part of a household, appear not to be considered a target group, and hence risk being consistently forgotten. The statistical information available is scarce, not gathered in one place, and is rarely presented in a coordinated and consistent manner. While UNICEF aims at ensuring statistical validity, the national framework for performing data gathering may vary, making comparison difficult. While in abundance, most indicators are not relevant for assessing the children without parental care or at risk of losing it,<sup>36</sup> and in some cases

the databases are not updated with new information.<sup>37</sup> Across the 12 focus countries, the documentation varies considerably and in some countries it is almost impossible to assess the situation for children in general, let alone for the children without parental care or at risk of losing it. In fact, these limitations of documentation constitute one of the main challenges identified in this report

- Commonly cited figures sometimes lack a consistent background. For instance, the very basis for claiming that 8 million children live in institutions is insecure and outdated.<sup>38</sup> This report has not examined the original sources for all figures.
- 3) Some of the issues relevant to the assessment of the situation for children without parental care or at risk of losing it are related to the dynamics of development aid and long-term foreign policy. The legal framework, priorities and governance of a country is highly relevant to the prevention of children falling out of parental care and how these children are provided for by the states according to their commitment to the UNCRC. The international community, collaborating states and external donors play an important role, since the support a country receives can be tied to different developmental goals or the SDGs. Assessments are made in these areas, but only on the basis of publicly available documents and, due to time constraints, not in a thorough manner. Indeed, one of the recommendations in this report is that further studies in this area are needed.
  - 4) Finally, the intrinsic complexity of the multiple rights violations causing loss of parental care and its consequences are tied together – hence, the issues can be causes, effects and consequences all at the same time.

32 <https://undg.org>

33 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx>

34 See Annex 2 for an overview of terminologies describing children in vulnerable situations by different organisations

35 MICS and other surveys are often based on household surveys

36 For instance, the World Bank presents almost 60 indicators relating to Education alone, but none of these seem relevant to children without parental care, see <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator>. Other databases that have been examined are: Eurostat, OECD, ILO, WHO. Websites

37 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator>, where figures are not updated with the latest figures from UNICEF MICS databases.

38 For instance, many policies and reports refer to at least 8 million children living in institutional care, a figure that was established in the 2006 UN Study on Violence Against Children. However, when looking more closely at the UN Study, the source of this figure seems to be an article from 1995 cited in a 2003 Save the Children report.

# 3 | The situation of children without parental care or at risk of losing parental care – a web of rights violations

## Fragmented documentation, policies and interventions pose multiple challenges

A range of policies, strategies, reports, toolkits, standards and guidelines examined for this report, show that there is a high attention to children's welfare and children's rights. However, the multitude of documents indicates a relatively high degree of fragmentation. The result of this apparent lack of coordination is two-fold:

- 1) It can be a challenge for national governments, donor countries and receiving countries alike to determine which strategies, policies and guidelines should be given the highest importance in designing national policies and interventions to reach children in general and children without parental care or at risk of losing it in particular
- 2) It can be a challenge to reach the children without parental care and families in need of support with appropriate initiatives, depriving them of their basic rights and services, in some cases to such a degree that their development might be seriously jeopardized.

As the list of terminology on page 7 suggests, describing the situation for children without parental care or at risk of losing it is not straight-forward. A common myth suggests that children without parental care are mostly orphans and living in institutions. However, the opposite is true: more than 80 % of children living in institutions have one or both parents alive,<sup>39</sup> most of the children entering SOS care in 2014 were not orphans,<sup>40</sup> and the same is true for the majority of children in street situations.<sup>41</sup>

39 Save the Children 'Keeping children out of harmful institutions' 2009  
40 SOS CVI 'The Situation of SOS Children's Villages Target Group', 2015; both Family Strengthening Programmes and Family-based care  
41 UN OHRC 'Protection and promotion of the rights of children working and/or living on the street' (2012)

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**"...There are stark contrasts between global advances on the one hand and the urgent, unmet needs of the world's most vulnerable children on the other"**

For every child, a fair chance. UNICEF November 2015

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Consequently, focusing on for instance HIV/AIDS orphans, or "orphans and vulnerable children/OVC" might be inadequate to reach children without parental care or at risk of losing it. In the long run, the effect of this misconception and of not defining the causes of risks to children in a holistic and comprehensive manner might lead to non-sustainable targets, interventions and achievements.<sup>42</sup>

Children without parental care are often defined according to the contexts in which they are outside of care. This is reflected in development programming, where focus on certain characteristics of their situation might lead to effectiveness in tailoring specific programmes. However, it can also contribute to technical silos that inhibit sharing of knowledge, tools and effective strategies, leading to inefficient use of resources. Most importantly: it risks losing sight of children in need of support.<sup>43</sup>

The MICS indicators<sup>44</sup> on "children living without one or both parents" and "children with one or both parents dead" give an indication of how many children are affected, but do not reveal the details of their situation. Of the 12 focus countries, only Mozambique has surveyed children with disabilities.<sup>45</sup> The State of the World's Children<sup>46</sup> reports provide estimates concerning the number of orphans by HIV/AIDS and other causes.

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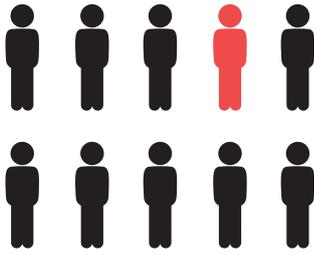
42 UNICEF 'For Every Child, a Fair Chance' 2015

43 USAID et al. 'Household Economic Strengthening in Support of Prevention of Family-Child Separation and Children's Reintegration in Family Care' 2015

44 [http://www.unicef.org/statistics/index\\_24302.html](http://www.unicef.org/statistics/index_24302.html)

45 See Annex 1 for statistics on children across the 12 countries

46 <http://www.unicef.org/sowc/>



**ACROSS 12 FOCUS COUNTRIES:**

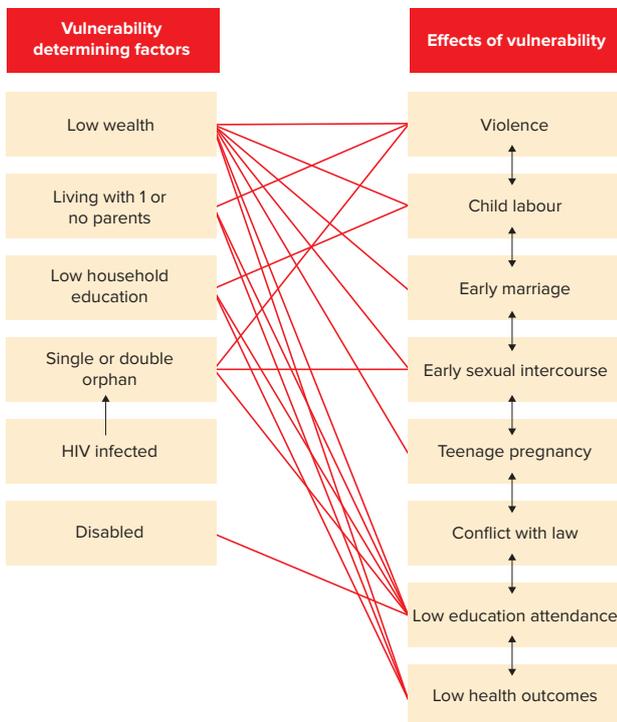
**-1 out of 10 children are living without one or both parents**, ranging from 0,6 % in the State of Palestine to 16,7 % in Malawi, in total 1,446 million children. For some countries, like Tanzania, this figure is not found.

**-1 out of 10 children have lost one or both parents**, ranging from 2,3 % in the State of Palestine to 11,6 % in Malawi, in total 1,021 million children. Again, the information is not available for all countries, like Tanzania.

Source: UNICEFs Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, Annex 1

## Multiple risk violations in complex interplay

Common for most children without parental care is the fact that they are deprived of, or risk being deprived of, the most important structure of development and the most basic children's right, a nurturing family. However, all the evidence examined for this report suggests that there is no single factor that makes children and families vulnerable. Rather, interplay between different factors has different effects on families and children. The Malawi National Plan of Action (NPA) for Vulnerable Children 2015-2019 illustrates how the interplay is seen in this country:



Source: Malawi National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children 2015-2019

The Malawi NPA defines vulnerabilities in terms of children aged 0-18 who are: Living in a household ranked in the bottom three wealth quintiles; Not living with either parent; Living in a household with adults with no education; Having lost one or both parents. In addition, living with HIV and living with a disability are combined with the four other factors, so as to add a layer to the other factors rendering a child vulnerable.

This report shows that an interplay between the following factors comprise the multiple risk violations which surround children without parental or at risk of losing parental care:<sup>47</sup>

**Poverty:** where families are extremely under-resourced, struggle to have a regular income and to provide for their children, leading parents to abandon their children or place them into alternative care, believing that this is the only way to provide education and other basic services for their children. Poverty accounted for 2 out of 3 households who entered an SOS Family Strengthening Programme in 2014.<sup>48</sup>

**Death of parents and poor health** outcomes (including physical and mental health) for children and their caregivers and lack of affordable health facilities, causing orphanage or leading parents to place their children into alternative care.<sup>49</sup> HIV/AIDS is a major contributor. In 2013, almost 18 million HIV/AIDS orphans were reported in total worldwide, where Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 15 million of these.<sup>50</sup>

**Socio-cultural factors:** migration, single parenthood, family breakdown, divorce and remarriage, teenage pregnancy, gender inequalities and discrimination, social exclusion.

**Psychosocial factors:** Violence and abuse, exploitation, substance abuse and addiction, parents' own experience with institutional care and incarceration of parents. Violence and abuse accounted for 73 % of children in SOS Villages in Venezuela and 88 % in Croatia.

**Political and economic factors:** armed conflict, natural disasters, inadequate government structure and services.

48 SOS Latin America and the Caribbean 'Causes and risks of losing parental care in Latin America and the Caribbean' 2015, UNDAF for Afghanistan (2015-2019), CR Committee Conclusions on Tanzania from 2015, UNDAF for Nepal 2013-2017, CR Committee country report Malawi 2014, Malawi National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children 2015-2019

48 SOS CVI 'The Situation of SOS Children's Villages Target Group' 2015

49 Ibid

50 UNICEF 'State of the World's Children 2015', figures by USAID

## CAUSES OF FAMILY BREAKDOWN: OVERWHELMED FAMILIES STRUGGLE TO COPE



The way these factors influence each other varies according to region, country and local community. The main reasons for entering into alternative care reported by former SOS children<sup>51</sup> were the death of the mother (almost half the children), the death of the father (1 out of 5 of the children) and poverty. However, the loss of a father was more important than the loss of the mother in Asia. This might be explained by national situations or traditions, where in Afghanistan, children are sometimes abandoned by their mothers, who traditionally have to marry a relative of their late husband, but cannot bring her children with her.<sup>52</sup> In Europe the main reason for admission was parental substance addiction, death of the mother and child abuse, and the children were much older when they came into care. The regional, national and even local variations call for context-specific interventions and policies.<sup>53</sup>

However, for some of the 12 focus countries, like Haiti, Myanmar, Ethiopia and Tanzania, the documentation on which such context-specific interventions and policies could be built is missing. The situation for children in general, and for children without parental care or at risk of losing it in particular is unknown due to lack of data.

The situation for children across the 12 focus countries is illustrated on page 14.

### Governance and children without parental care or at risk of losing parental care

**“The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires State Parties to adopt all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to safeguard every child’s fundamental rights”**

UN: Towards a World Free from Violence 2013

Governance can be defined as “the traditions, mechanisms and institutions by which authorities exercise and manage their affairs, resources and policies in conjunction with the interests of their constituents”, including both governmental authorities as well as private and social actors.<sup>54</sup>

**Good governance** is defined in terms of the mechanisms and processes needed to promote effective governance and achieve the goals of development.<sup>55</sup> Good governance is a priority for the Norwegian government<sup>56</sup> and the global community alike, focusing on such issues as anti-corruption, human rights in detention facilities, peace-building, contributing to stability and accountable institutions and legislation, capacity building and developing an investment

51 SOS CVI ‘Tracking footprints’ 2010

52 UN CR Committee conclusions on Afghanistan periodic review 2011

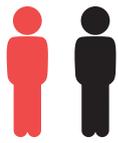
53 SOS CVI ‘Tracking footprints’ 2010

54 Better Care Network et al. ‘Protect my future. The links between child protection and good governance’ 2013

55 World Bank ‘What is Governance?’ 2013

56 Sundvolden-erklæringen, Norwegian government political platform. October 2013

# THE SITUATION FOR CHILDREN ACROSS 12 FOCUS COUNTRIES



**CHILD POPULATION:** Half of the population is under 18 years (52 %), ranging from 35 % in Myanmar to 54 % in Afghanistan.

14 % are below 5 years old, ranging from 10 % in Myanmar to 17 % in Mali.



**STUNTING:** A third (37 %) of the children are stunted, with Afghanistan having the highest rate of stunting in the world with almost 60 %

Source: UNDAF for Afghanistan (2015-2019)

**VACCINATIONS:** 2 out of 5 children between 12 and 23 months had been fully vaccinated (43 %).



**Early childhood education:** 1 in 5 children attended early childhood education (18 %). In Afghanistan, only 1 % of children attended early childhood education



**EARLY MARRIAGE:** 2 out of 5 girls were married before turning 18 (41 %), 1 in 10 before they were 15 (11%), and 1 in 4 girls had a child before turning 18 (26 %).

**INADEQUATE CARE:** 1 out of 3 children across 7 of the 12 countries had been left with inadequate care, ranging from 14,3 % in the State of Palestine to 40 % in Afghanistan

Defined by a child being left alone or in the care of another child 10 years or younger for one or more hours during the last week



**CHILD LABOUR:** Every third child was involved in some kind of child labour. In Afghanistan 60 % of child labourers were attending school, while in Mozambique 25 % and in Somalia 29 % of child labourers were able to attend school.

**BIRTH REGISTRATION:** Almost half of all the children had been registered at birth, ranging from so few in Somalia that this indicator was eliminated during the data collection, to 99 % in the State of Palestine. In some countries, it was found that the registration rate varied considerably between the poorest households and the richest.



**VIOLENCE:** Almost 4 out of 5 children had experienced violence during the last month



**PRIMARY EDUCATION:** 3 out of 5 children were enrolled in primary education, ranging from 11 % in South Sudan to 97 % in the State of Palestine. However, the rate to which children moved on to secondary education, varied from 20 % in Mozambique to 97 % in the State of Palestine



On average, half of children who had lost one or both parents attended school (53 %).

friendly industry environment.<sup>57</sup> While bilateral discussions on government might not always be publicly accounted for, there appears to be relatively few traces of advocacy for child rights governance in the Norwegian government's bilateral work, even though it has been supportive of the eradication of child marriages in for instance Malawi.<sup>58</sup>

The way a country provides for its children in terms of laws, policies and services is important for how children's rights in general are ensured, and how children who have lost parental care or are at risk of losing it are cared for. The European Commission defines integrated child protection systems as "the way in which all duty-bearers and system components work together across sectors and agencies sharing responsibilities to form a protective and empowering environment for all children."<sup>59</sup>

However, UNICEF has shown that few governments have actually set aside funding for interventions regarding child protection, and in 2013, only 26 of 104 countries had financial or human resources allocated to address violence against children. Only a third of the world's countries periodically evaluate child protection policy structures to assess progress and results and subsequently allow for adjustments, and a third of the countries never do this.<sup>60</sup>

The UN Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children recommend national governments to "ensure that families have access to forms of support to develop and implement comprehensive child welfare and protection policies with a view to prevent family separation and to provide children with adequate alternative care when needed, with the best interest of the child at the centre of processes."<sup>61</sup> In 2013, UNICEF reported<sup>62</sup> that 58 countries have an Alternative Care Policy in line with the UN Guidelines, 121 countries have estimated data on children in residential care and 94 countries reported data on children in foster care. UNICEF provided support to at least 38 countries to strengthen aspects of alternative care work.

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**“In the absence of appropriate child protection policies and restorative justice services designed to tackle the root causes [of violence] and enable victims to be rehabilitated, the costs to societies remain high.”**

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General comment 13

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Key challenges to the implementation of the UN Guidelines and adequate interventions include **weak leadership** in government in terms of implementation of legislation, planning and coordination; low financial and human resources set aside for providing appropriate care for children; lack of data and information to inform evidence-based planning and policy-making.<sup>63</sup> This might result in children without parental care or at risk of losing it being provided for by a range of NGOs operating without licences, standards or oversight, consequently suffering further rights violations.

All the 12 countries prioritized by the Norwegian government have ratified the UNCRC, and all of the four focus countries have legislation in place aimed at ensuring child protection and ensuring that their rights and needs are met. Even so, many of these countries have not followed up with child protection policies or services. Consequently, children's rights are not ensured, and the children without parental care or at risk of losing it are not prioritized.

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57 Proposition no 1 (2015–2016) to the Norwegian Parliament (National Budget) and the report on the national budget spending in 2015

58 <https://www.norad.no/landsider/afrika/malawi/>

59 European Commission 'Reflection paper in view of the 9th European Forum on the rights of the child' 30 April 2015. Duty-bearers are described as the state authorities represented by law enforcement, judicial authorities, immigration authorities, social services, child protection agencies. System components are described as laws, policies, resources, procedures, processes, sub-systems

60 UN 'Towards a World Free from Violence' 2013

61 UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children

62 UN 'Towards a World Free from Violence' 2013

63 SOS CVI et al. 'Drumming together for change' 2014

## National frameworks for child protection in four focus countries

Across the four focus countries, the information gathered mirror the fragmentation of the documentation available. Nevertheless, it can provide an overall picture of how the country situation influences children's vulnerabilities.

### NEPAL

Nepal is seen as a best practice example in terms of reaching the Millennium Development Goals, with an explicit focus on "bringing all children of the country progressively within the net of social protection".<sup>64</sup> A number of legal instruments regarding the protection of children, including orphans and disadvantaged communities are in place,<sup>65</sup> as well as an approach to support children without parental care, with emergency support to children, and a family reunification system. Even so, there is a lack of planning for facilities for children without parental care or at risk of losing it.<sup>66</sup>

Expenditure on social services increased from 4,3 % in 2001-2002 to 22,9 % in 2007-2008. The number of children in Early childhood development programmes (ECD) increased by 24 % and special budget allocation is set aside for providing ECD to children from deprived classes. Even so, in 2014, 1/3 of children had access to early childhood education, with a gap between rich and poor (67% vs. 14%). The government is implementing programmes to help persons with disabilities, but only 1 % of primary school students are children with disability, so this has limited effect.<sup>67</sup>

The root cause for vulnerabilities considered to be tradition, and a need for multi-faceted and crosscutting interventions is defined.<sup>68</sup> In the UNDAF for Nepal, children without parental care is not a primary target group, but many of the proposed interventions will also benefit these children.

64 UN CR Committee periodic review/country report of Nepal 2014  
65 Nepal National Action Plan on Human Rights (2010-2013)  
66 UN CR Committee periodic review/country report of Nepal 2014  
67 Ibid  
68 UNDAF for Nepal 2013-2017

### AFGHANISTAN

The national situation in Afghanistan is regarded as posing multiple risks to the well-being of children.<sup>69</sup> A legal framework is in place, but many laws contradict their commitment to UNCRC. Implementation is slow due to lack of capacity and political will, insufficient resources, weak enforcement and leadership. While there seems to be relevant provision in urban areas, the rural provision is low.<sup>70</sup> The options for alternative care are underdeveloped, leading to excessive institutionalisation, where most care facilities are unregistered and not adequately monitored<sup>71</sup>

There are few comprehensive plans for children's rights and few plans in budgets, no plans for monitoring the allocation and impact of resources and a general absence of a comprehensive data collection system. In terms of justice, child victims of violence, abuse and exploitation are often prosecuted while the perpetrators go free; domestic abuse has not been criminalised, and if children are to run away, they are sometimes charged with criminal offence of prostitution or adultery, regardless of the situation.<sup>72</sup>

Due to "traditional values" limiting women and girls' possibility to move about freely, their access to basic services is jeopardized, which might lead to women treating their children and themselves with narcotic substances. This in turn might lead to addiction, low participation in education, violence, neglect and abuse.<sup>73</sup>

Educational institutions, while supposedly free, ask parents for "voluntary contributions", which limits access to education by vulnerable children and families.<sup>74</sup> The country lacks a comprehensive system for protective social services for families and children, and positive family coping mechanisms have been eroded by poverty, war and displacement.

All social service delivery systems in place are donor-built and -provided, and are thus not sustainable in the long term, since they also experience instability because of funding and staffing. The national health system is not sufficient to meet these challenges, where only 1/3 of the population has access.<sup>75</sup>

69 UNDAF for Afghanistan 2015-2019  
70 UN CR Committee conclusions on periodic review of Afghanistan 2011 and UNDAF for Afghanistan 2015-2019  
71 UN CR Committee conclusions on periodic review of Afghanistan 2011  
72 Ibid  
73 Ibid  
74 Ibid  
75 UNDAF for Afghanistan 2015-2019

## MALAWI

Malawi has adopted relevant legal measures for child protection,<sup>76</sup> and has implemented a pilot Social Cash Transfer Scheme. Children without care are explicitly mentioned, and some of the provisions, targeted at ultra-poor households will probably work to prevent children losing parental care.<sup>77</sup> There are plans to provide 65 % of OVC households (with an emphasis of children affected by HIV/AIDS) with free basic support by December 2016, and a goal to ensure that these children are not falling behind in terms of education.

By 2019, 80 % of the vulnerable children in Malawi should have access to essential quality services for survival, and there are provisions for parent training and training of local authorities in monitoring child protection in the communities. In addition, tangible targets in terms of increasing the access to foster homes are formulated, and there are plans to enhance the quality of care provided in institutions and other organisations through supporting child placements and reintegration and implementing standards of quality for institutions.<sup>78</sup> However, with this strong focus on HIV/AIDS, there is a risk that children who have lost or risk losing parental care for other reasons will not receive the provisions they need.

In terms of funding, the government institutions appear to have limited funds, and the majority of funding therefore has to come from development partners, NGOs and the private sector.

## TANZANIA

An overall lack of structures, systems and services to provide effective protection to children in Tanzania is identified.<sup>79</sup> While a legal framework is in place, there appears to be a low rate of implementation, due to insufficient resources, low coordination capacity, initiatives are not followed up with financial or human resources, and the most vulnerable children were left behind.<sup>80</sup> There are an increasing number of children living without parental care,<sup>81</sup> but while HIV/AIDS orphans are described as among “the most vulnerable children”, children without care for other reasons are not particularly mentioned in the plans for the country.

There has been little focus on identifying and responding to children in need of protection from abuse, violence and exploitation<sup>82</sup> and corporal punishment is still justified in legislation. A People with Disability Act was passed in 2010,<sup>83</sup> but albino children are still suffering from violence and discrimination, and there are few systematic measures to eliminate the discrimination and root causes to violence against this group.<sup>84</sup>

An urgent requirement to increase and train personnel, develop monitoring, referral and response systems, strengthen district and national data collection and promote shared awareness at community and statutory levels of children’s rights is identified.<sup>85</sup>

The legislation stipulates alternative or substitute care, and guidelines for dealing with children who are deprived of the family environment are being developed, which will include periodic review and oversight. It seems that there is a system for issuing operating licences. Nevertheless, a number of children’s homes operate without registration or adequate inspection, with numerous cases of child abuse.<sup>86</sup> Despite good intentions and reports, children continue to live in institutions without any review of the placement. Poor coordination causes a lack of alternative care services.<sup>87</sup>

76 Malawi ‘National Social Support Policy’ 2013 and ‘National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children 2015-2019’

77 CR Committee conclusions on Malawi 2014

78 Malawi ‘National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children 2015-2019’

79 UNDAF for Tanzania 2011-2015

80 CR Committee periodic review/country report of Tanzania 2015, where the ‘National Costed Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children’ (NCPA for OVC) 2007-2010, is described: extended to 62 Tanzania Mainland districts, 160.000 children had received some kind of support.

81 CR Committee conclusions on Tanzania periodic review 2015

82 UNDAF for Tanzania 2011-2015

83 Tanzania ‘Long Term Perspective Plan’ from June 2012 (2011/2012-2025-2026)

84 CR Committee conclusions on periodic review of Tanzania 2015

85 UNDAF for Tanzania 2011-2015

86 CR Committee country periodic review report Tanzania 2012

87 CR Committee conclusions on periodic review of Tanzania 2015

## Birth registration – the basic right to exist

**Across the globe, nearly 230 million children have never been registered, and therefore do not officially exist.** As an effect, he or she may be denied health care or education, it can mean that a child may enter into marriage or the labour market, or be conscripted into the armed forces, before the legal age. If accused of a crime or migrating with or without parental care, unregistered children may be detained and prosecuted as adults, due to their inability to prove their age. If separated from their parents, retracing, reunification and community reintegration can be difficult. In adulthood, birth certificates may be required to obtain social assistance or a job in the formal sector, to buy or prove the right to inherit property, to vote and to obtain a passport. Registering children at birth is the first step in securing their recognition before the law, safeguarding their rights, and ensuring that any violation of these rights does not go unnoticed.

UNICEF Every Child's Birth Right 2013

Being registered at birth is a birth right – without it, children are not assigned a nationality, and lose out on basic rights.<sup>88</sup> However, being registered is not the same as getting a birth certificate. Globally, 4 out of 10 of all children born are not registered, and while in the CEE/CIS region, almost all children were registered at birth, in particular Asian and Sub-Saharan African children lag behind. UNICEF also reports that children who lack birth registration are often from certain ethnic or religious groups, they live in rural or remote areas, their mothers are often uneducated or they come from the poorest households.<sup>89</sup> These are characteristics that overlap with the characteristics of children without parental care or at risk of losing it, indicating that these children are amongst those who lack birth registration.

Across all 12 focus countries, 45 % of the children have been registered. The assessment of the four countries show that while many of the countries have legislation and regulation in place concerning birth registration, the registration rate is low. Both children in street situations<sup>90</sup> and children in migration<sup>91</sup> might experience multiple rights violations because they lack identification documents.

88 UNICEF 'Every child's birth right' 2013

89 Ibid

90 UN OHRC 'Protection and promotion of the rights of children working and/or living on the street' 2012

91 UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants Report 2015 A/HRC/29/36

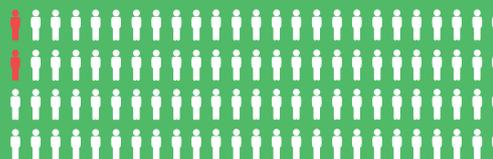
**AFGHANISTAN:** 37 % of the children were registered in 2013, with a gap between rich (60 %) and poor (30 %).<sup>92</sup> In particular refugee, returnee and internally displaced children have problems accessing birth registration, ID documents and basic services<sup>93</sup>



**NEPAL:** 58 % of the children were registered in 2014, an increase from 35 % in 2006. Birth registration is free within 35 days of birth.



**MALAWI:** In 2013, only 2 % of the children had been registered at birth. Birth registration is mandatory within six weeks after birth, and failure to register a child can lead to 5 years of imprisonment<sup>94</sup> There are plans of an awareness campaign, where the target is that 20 % of vulnerable children will be registered by 2019.<sup>95</sup>



**TANZANIA:** 16 % of the children were registered at birth in 2013. In 2010, the figures showed a gap between poor households (4 %) and the richest households (56 %). While there has been improvement, the main challenge is the costs of production and sending birth certificates, particular into rural areas. Children in alternative care tend to be less likely than average to be registered.<sup>96</sup>



92 Annex 1

93 CR Committee conclusions on periodic review of Afghanistan (2011)

94 CR Committee country report/periodic review Malawi 2014

95 Malawi National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children 2015-2019

96 Femte skal være: SOS CVI et al. 'Drumming together for change' 2014

## 1 IN 5 PERSONS IN THE WORLD LIVE BELOW THE POVERTY LINE



Europe (CEE/CIS): 1 %



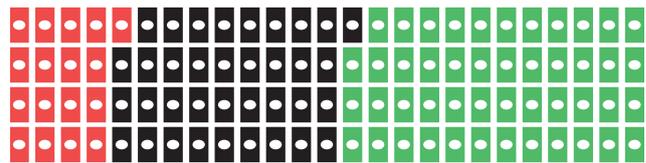
Sub-Saharan Africa: 47 %



Southeast Asia: 33 %



Source: UNICEF 'State of the World's Children 2015'



17 % of world's household income benefits the 40 % poorest households and 47 % benefits the 20 % richest

## Poverty

Poverty is considered one of the main reasons for losing parental care. Its causes are adverse, and influenced by environmental factors, employment situation, educational level, war and conflict, political instability, poor health, including HIV/AIDS, discrimination and stigmatisation. Poverty leads to chronic hunger and parents finding it hard to provide for their children, a main reason why children were placed in alternative care in Sub-Saharan Africa,<sup>97</sup> where the child population is increasing.<sup>98</sup> Poverty also causes stress for families, which potentially increases the use of violence, in turn increasing the risk of losing parental care.<sup>99</sup>

There are great differences across the 12 focus countries, and to a certain degree correlation between poverty and the number of children living without one or both parents or being a single or double orphan, for instance in Malawi.

COUNTRY	POPULATION LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE (PERCENTAGE)	ONE OR BOTH PARENTS ARE DEAD (PERCENTAGE OF CHILD POPULATION)	LIVING WITHOUT ONE OR BOTH PARENTS (PERCENTAGE OF CHILD POPULATION)
Afghanistan	30	4,7	1,7
Nepal	25	4,3	4,8
Malawi	60	11,6	16,7
Tanzania	30	No info available	No info available

97 SOS CVI et al. 'Drumming together for change' 2014

98 SOS CVI 'Situation of SOS Children's Villages Target group' 2015

99 The CR Committee country report/periodic review from Malawi 2014 states that poverty is the main driver for neglect and abuse in the country. Supported by ACPF 'The African Report on Violence Against Children' 2014

## Orphanhood, HIV/AIDS, abandonment and neglect

### Abandonment and HIV/AIDS

Orphanhood as such does not appear to be well documented, but it is also only one of many reasons why children fall out of parental care.<sup>100</sup> Even so, HIV/AIDS orphans are in many cases the main focus group in the definition of "orphans and vulnerable children (OVC)". HIV/AIDS has been found to put additional pressure on the extended family in Sub-Saharan Africa. Consequently, where the extended family would normally be the natural place for children in need of care, with HIV/AIDS there are just too many children to take care of.<sup>101</sup>

Across the 12 focus countries, 1 out of 10 children are single or double orphans.

In determining the number of HIV/AIDS orphans, USAID provides some figures across the four countries.<sup>102</sup> UNAIDS in 2012 estimated that almost 3 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa live with HIV/AIDS.<sup>103</sup> Experts agree that the HIV/AIDS epidemic can be ended by 2030, and that this will contribute to "significant declines in ill health, stigma, deaths and the number of orphans."<sup>104</sup>

### Abandonment and neglect

Abandonment and neglect are quite often mentioned as reasons for children losing parental care, even if little documentation can be found. Neglect, defined as the absence of responsive relationships<sup>105</sup> is considered the most common

100 Save the Children 2009 'Keeping children out of harmful institutional care': 80 % of the children institutions are not orphans

101 SOS CVI et al. 'Drumming together for change' 2014

102 UNICEF 'State of the World's Children 2015'

103 <http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/campaigns/globalreport2013/factsheet>

104 UNAIDS 'The Gap Report' 2014

105 Harvard Center of the Developing child

form of child abuse, although the least documented form of violence in Africa.<sup>106</sup> However, recent research suggests that neglect might cause more severe impacts than physical violence.<sup>107</sup> Neglect and abandonment were important factors for falling out of parental care in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>108</sup> Although not directly a measurement of abandonment or neglect, the “inadequate care” indicator in the MICS framework might give an indication as to how many children experience this from time to time.



## Children with disabilities

WHO estimates that some 93 million children worldwide – one in 20 children under 15 years of age – live with a moderate or severe disability.<sup>109</sup> Globally, it appears that documentation is scarce, and across the 12 focus countries, figures were only available for Mozambique and Nepal:

- Mozambique: 14 % of the child population in in 2008<sup>110</sup>
- Nepal: 12,5 % of the total population had a disability in 2014.<sup>111</sup>

Children with disabilities are at greater risk of losing parental care and are placed in alternative care and institutions to a much larger extent than their non-disabled peers.<sup>112</sup> They also to a higher degree experience a number of rights violations: lack of social support, social stigma, non-access to education and health care, discrimination and violence.

106 ACPF ‘The African Report on Violence Against Children’ 2014  
 107 Harvard Center of the Developing child  
 108 SOS Latin America and the Caribbean ‘Causes and risks of losing parental care in Latin America and the Caribbean’ 2015  
 109 WHO ‘Global Disability Action Plan 2014–2021’  
 110 Annex 1  
 111 CR Committee country report/periodic review for Nepal 2014  
 112 UN ‘Towards a World Free from Violence’ 2013

In addition, they are met with negative traditional beliefs and ignorance and have difficulty reporting on for instance violence,<sup>113</sup> even if there is a reporting system in place. When they do report, they are less often believed.<sup>114</sup>

## Child labour

Child labour is defined as “work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development”.<sup>115</sup> The International Labour Organisation (ILO) describes how labour can be “mentally, physically, socially or morally harmful or dangerous, depriving children the opportunity to go to school, obliging them to leave school early or combining school and work. In the most extreme cases, children are enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to hazards and illnesses or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities.”<sup>116</sup>

## “Almost all working children are by definition deprived of protection”

African Child Policy Forum 2014<sup>117</sup>

Working children are not necessarily without parental care, but children may nevertheless be separated from their families to move to relatives and others to do domestic work. An estimated 5 million children across Africa are engaged in domestic work,<sup>118</sup> which may be considered a hidden category of child labour that is particularly undocumented. Children in domestic work are exposed to a range of risks: exhaustive work, risks to health and safety and deprivation of access to basic rights to education and development.<sup>119</sup> The links between child labour and children without parental care or at risk of losing it appear undocumented, although it has been established that children may need to work to be able to exist if separated from their families. Working children might be found in factories, some are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation or sold into prostitution<sup>120</sup> or they migrate from rural to urban areas seeking job opportunities.<sup>121</sup>

113 ACPF ‘The African Report on Violence Against Children’ 2014: children with disabilities are twice as likely to suffer abuse as their non-disabled peers.  
 114 Ibid  
 115 <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/lang--en/index.htm>  
 116 Ibid  
 117 ACPF ‘The African Report on Violence Against Children’ 2014  
 118 ACPF ‘The African Report on Violence Against Children’ 2014  
 119 Ibid  
 120 CR Committee conclusions on periodic review of Afghanistan 2011  
 121 CR Committee country report/periodic review Nepal 2014

## CHILD LABOUR

**168  
mill**

Globally: 168 million children are engaged in some form of labour in 2012,<sup>122</sup> over half in hazardous work



**ACROSS THE 12 COUNTRIES:**  
1/3 of children are engaged in some form of labour



**AFGHANISTAN:** 1/4 of children are engaged in some form of labour



**NEPAL:** More than 1/3 of children are engaged in some form of labour



**MALAWI:** 2 out of 5 (40 %) children are engaged in some form of labour



**TANZANIA:** 1 out of 5 children are engaged in some form of labour

## Early marriage and childbearing

Early marriage is often part of a tradition or custom, and in some countries, like Afghanistan, there are incentives in the legislation for marrying children off early.<sup>123</sup> Even with an increasing number of countries prohibiting early marriage,<sup>124</sup> and many multilateral organisations raising awareness of the issue, globally 1 in 4 girls are still married before they turn 18.<sup>125</sup> It has to be assumed that girls who are married off early are separated from their parents. Marrying girls off takes the pressure off poverty-stricken families or it becomes a safety net for girls with few other options for survival.

Marrying, and perhaps becoming pregnant, deprives the girls (and sometimes boys) of basic rights to development as well as basic services like education and health care. The multitude of rights violations early marriage and early child bearing constitute in terms of health, education, equality, non-discrimination and to live free from violence and exploitation, means there is a risk of reproducing a negative cycle of disadvantage.<sup>126</sup>

## EARLY MARRIAGE AND CHILDBEARING

### WORLDWIDE



1 in 4 girls are married before turning 18  
2 million girls worldwide have a child before turning 15

### ACROSS THE 12 COUNTRIES



1 in 10 girls are married before turning 15



2 in 5 girls are married before turning 18



1 in 4 girls had a child before turning 18

**AFGHANISTAN:** 15 % of girls were married before the age of 15, increasing to 40 % before turning 18

**NEPAL:** 15 % girls were married before the age of 15, increasing to almost 50 % before turning 18

**MALAWI:** 1 in 8 girls were married before the age of 15, increasing to 50 % before turning 18

**TANZANIA:** 7 % of girls were married before the age of 15, and almost 4 out of 10 before turning 18

**NEPAL:** 16 % had a child before turning 18

**TANZANIA AND MALAWI:** almost 1/3 of girls had a child before turning 18

123 CR Committee conclusions on periodic review of Afghanistan 2011

124 For instance, both Nepal and Malawi have such legislation in place.

125 See Annex 1

126 <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/>

122 UN 'Towards a World Free from Violence' 2013

## War, conflict and natural disasters, children deprived of freedom

War, conflict and natural disasters, displacement, migration or death of parents all cause children to lose parental care. Children might also be recruited to armed forces, they may be in conflict with the law and put in detention or they may be deprived of their freedom in situations of being unaccompanied migrants. In all of these situations, children are subject to a wide range of rights violations, many are deprived of their right to parental care, and many of these situations pose a risk of losing parental care.

These situations make children more vulnerable to violence, rape and other sexual violence, forced marriage, humiliating treatment, detention and torture in addition to being deprived of their basic human rights, like nutrition, health services and education. The effects on children can be traumatic and devastating.

### Migration as a cause of losing parental care

Children are affected by migration on multiple levels: when they are left behind by one or both migrating parents, in

migrating with parents (or born abroad), or when they migrate alone.<sup>132</sup> Unaccompanied migrating children are amongst the most vulnerable children on the move, but since little comprehensive information on their situation exists, the ability to protect them is inhibited.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, unaccompanied children and adolescents easily become victims of trafficking and smuggling by criminal networks, and they are at risk of abuse and violence and detention, where they live and sleep with adults, without any special accommodation made for their young age. Families might be separated in different sections of the detention facility according to age and gender, causing separation. Their lack of a birth certificate and poor documentation of their situation pose further challenges in terms of placement, reunification and provision of basic rights like health services, sanitation, water and food, as well as education, a concern for UN and NGOs alike.<sup>134</sup>

132 [http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/index\\_48562.html](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/index_48562.html)

133 UNICEF 'Protecting children on the move' 2015

134 UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants Report 2015 A/HRC/29/36

## DOCUMENTING THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE IN WAR, CONFLICT, AND INSTABILITY ACROSS THE 12 FOCUS COUNTRIES

**246  
mill**

Conflict affects 246 million children worldwide<sup>135</sup>

- In 2015, the number of children recruited into armed forces varied from 68 and 819 in the countries for which information was available.<sup>136</sup>
- In **Tanzania**, there were 1400 children in detention facilities in 2011,<sup>137</sup> where a number of challenges were identified: lack of reliable legal aid services to children, insufficient number of social welfare officer and of personnel with specialized training on juvenile justice.
- In **Afghanistan**, 258 children were in detention in 2014, many were ill-treated or tortured. In **Somalia**, 286 children were found to be held by the national army and not allowed to leave the centre, and in **Mali** and **Myanmar**, while not presenting figures, the UN Special rapporteur on children in armed conflict in 2015 expressed concern about children in detention.<sup>138</sup>
- In **Somalia**, at least 80.000 people were displaced in 2014; there were at least 13 cases of abduction resulting in rape and forced marriage, in **Afghanistan** 38 cases were identified, with reports of rape and killing, and in **South Sudan**, 252 children were abducted in 2014, continuing at large numbers in 2015.

**88.245**

In 2015, 88.245 unaccompanied children, travelling without the care of an adult, sought asylum in the EU, an increase from 23.150 in 2014.<sup>139</sup> 90 % of the migrants coming to the EU, do so via organised criminal networks.

135 UNICEF 'Protecting children on the move' 2015

136 UN Special rapporteur on Children in armed conflicts Annual report 2015

137 CR Committee country report/periodic review Tanzania 2012

138 UN Special rapporteur on Children in armed conflicts Annual report 2015

139 Eurostat

## Violence

**“Violence may result in greater susceptibility to lifelong social, emotional, and cognitive impairments and to health-risk behaviours, such as substance abuse and early initiation of sexual behaviour. Related mental health and social problems include anxiety and depressive disorders, hallucinations, impaired work performance, memory disturbances, as well as aggressive behaviour. Early exposure to violence is associated with later lung, heart and liver disease, sexually transmitted diseases and foetal death during pregnancy, as well as later intimate partner violence and suicide attempts.”**

UN Study on Violence Against Children 2006

The detrimental effects of violence are universally acknowledged, affecting 8 out of 10 children across the 7 of the 12 focus countries where information was available.

While a stable family environment is described as an important protection against violence,<sup>140</sup> violence is also one of the causes of family breakdown, augmented by high stress levels caused by low income and unemployment. In Latin America and the Caribbean, domestic violence was the main cause of children losing parental care, with sexual abuse and alcohol misuse as second and third reasons. More than 6 million children across this region are subjected to severe abuse.<sup>141</sup> In Europe, violence and abuse were the second most important reason for entering SOS care.<sup>142</sup>

Corporal punishment is embedded in legislation in many countries, like in Afghanistan and Tanzania, and is sometimes considered beneficial to children, teaching them not to be spoiled.<sup>143</sup> In Nepal, there is an apparent underreporting of cases of child abuse and neglect, where the root causes are considered to be social taboo, fear of undermining the social status of the family and other structural factors.<sup>144</sup> Violence is one of the most common and serious consequences of being without parental care.

## Child-headed households

The UN Guidelines define children in child-headed households, single and adolescent parents as at particular risk of leaving children in need of alternative care provision.<sup>145</sup> In Malawi, Tanzania and Nepal, the number of child-headed households has been increasing. The reasons are identified as poverty, children falling out of parental care, having lost

both parents, neglect and abandonment as well as HIV/AIDS. In Tanzania, there has been an increase in children living without parental care,<sup>146</sup> with an estimated 200,000 children living in child-headed households,<sup>147</sup> and in Malawi, it is estimated that 12,000 children live in child-headed households.<sup>148</sup>

In Tanzania, it was found that, where left without support and supervision, these children were not attending school. In terms of providing support to these children, the eldest children who are in charge risk being deprived of their rights both as children and as carers.

## Children in institutional care

The harmful consequences of living in institutional care are well documented and acknowledged. Across the world, the number of children living in institutional care is largely undocumented. While the most commonly cited figure is 8 million, the basis of this figure is highly insecure and outdated.<sup>149</sup> The multiple rights violations that children who live in institutions are suffering from range from developmental damage, increased risk of abuse and exploitation and difficulties with community reintegration, stigma, low employment, lack of life skills and increased social dependency – all of which may lead to potential lasting damage, reproducing a cycle of disadvantage. Even so, most of the documentation found is focused on violence.

Residential and institutional care was believed to be the most prevalent type of alternative formal care in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2008, and the demand is growing.<sup>150</sup> Despite childcare reforms across most Council of Europe Member States, the rate of children in institutional care in 12 out of 20 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) increased between 2000 and 2007. In Malawi, it is estimated that 10,000 children live in alternative care.<sup>151</sup>

In many parts of the world, institutions are not registered by the government or they operate illegally, and some are provided by private or non-governmental organisations, which suggests that there is likely to be vast underreporting.<sup>152</sup> It is not uncommon with many children per facility. In Malawi, there are an average of 83 children per facility, and across Sub-Saharan Africa, it has been found that

140 UN 'Study on Violence Against Children' 2006

141 SOS Latin America and the Caribbean 'Causes and risks of losing parental care in Latin America and the Caribbean'. 2015

142 SOS CVI 'Tracking footprints' 2010

143 ACPF 'The African Report on Violence Against Children' 2014

144 CR Committee country report/periodic review from Nepal 2014

145 UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children 2009

146 CR Committee conclusions on periodic review from Tanzania 2015

147 SOS CVI et al. 'Drumming together for change' 2014

148 Malawi National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children 2015-2019, supported by SOS CVI et al: 'Drumming together for change' 2014

149 See Chapter 2

150 SOS CVI et al. 'Drumming together for change' 2014

151 Malawi National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children 2015-2019 and supported by SOS CVI, University of Malawi and Celcis: Drumming together for change 2014

152 SOS CVI et al. 'Drumming together for change' 2014 and UN 'Study on Violence Against Children' 2006

many facilities operate without a trained social worker, there is low staffing level and high turnover of staff, all of which create higher risks to the children living in the facility. 7 out of 10 care providers were not trained in child-care related issues, and standards vary from one facility to the next. In some cases, parents have been recruited by alternative care facilities for the purpose of financial gains of inter-country adoption<sup>153</sup> or trafficking.

## INSTITUTIONAL CARE

- 2 million children, an estimated 4 out of 10 of all children in institutional care, are found in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS).
- In Malawi, 8 % of children in residential care reported having been raped or been forced to have sex under death threat, 1 out of 3 children had suffered mental violence, where 2/3 of the perpetrators were other children, and 1/3 were caretakers. 43 % of boys living in residential institutions suffered physical violence.<sup>154</sup>
  - In Kazakhstan 1 out of every 4 child in shelters had seen staff using violence against other children, causing serious anxiety and emotional distress, which resulted in acts of self-harm.<sup>155</sup>
- Among former SOS children, it was found that 1/3 had tertiary or university education, while only very few of the adults had no formal education, with some regional differences.

## Children in street situations

There are an estimated 130 to 150 million children in street situations today.<sup>156</sup> Orphans and abandoned children are unusual,<sup>157</sup> which means that their loss of parental care is preventable with adequate family strengthening and parenting support interventions. Mostly anecdotal, documentation largely consists of insecure estimations for certain cities or even for certain parts of cities.<sup>158</sup> For instance, in Nepal it is estimated that around 800 children live on the streets in Kathmandu, and around 2000 throughout the country, where about 4 in 5 are boys.<sup>159</sup> In Malawi, it is estimated that 80 % of street the children sleep at home, and are thus not without parental care.<sup>160</sup>

The documentation that exists confirms that the cause of children in street situation is, as for other groups of children living without parental care, multiple violations of rights, in terms of persistent discrimination, poverty and social exclusion within societies where the inequalities are high and growing.<sup>161</sup> Society's failure to provide support and basic services to children and families may leave them overwhelmed and struggling to cope, where conflict, violence, HIV/AIDS, illness, early marriage and natural disasters weaken children's connection to family and their community.

Children living on the street continue to suffer from multiple rights violations, such as stigma, lack of access to basic services, like health and education, sexual, physical and mental violence, mental and physical illness and substance abuse. Many lack identification documents, and reintegration with families and communities is difficult.<sup>162</sup>

153 ACPF 'The African Report on Violence Against Children' 2014 and SOS CVI et al. 'Drumming together for change' 2014

154 Ibid

155 UN 'Towards a World Free from Violence' 2013

156 <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/fight-against-discrimination/education-of-children-in-need/street-children/>

157 UN OHRC 'Protecting and promotion of the rights of children working on the street' 2012

158 ILO 'World report on child labour' 2015 and <http://www.streetchildren-day.org/the-day/myth-busters/>

159 CR Committee country report/periodic review from Nepal 2014

160 Malawi National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children 2015-2019

161 UN OHRC 'Protecting and promotion of the rights of children working on the street' 2012

162 Ibid

# 4 | Investments pay off

**By addressing childhood deprivation head-on – focusing first on those children left furthest behind and most intently on those with the greatest needs – societies can disrupt the destructive cycle of impoverishment and marginalisation.**

UNICEF For Every Child, a Fair Chance, 2015

The UN Agenda 2030 states that “all countries stand to benefit from having a healthy and well-educated workforce with the knowledge and skills needed for productive and fulfilling work and full participation in society” (Art 27). This reflects the acknowledgement of an increasing body of research, international organisations and the Norwegian government alike<sup>163</sup> that investing in children and young people, in particular the most deprived and vulnerable from low-income countries, can be beneficial for the individual child and both cost-effective and beneficial for society in the short and long term, contributing to sustainable development. Failing to invest in “those with the greatest needs” means they do not have a fair chance to realize their rights; they fall further behind and equity gaps widen.<sup>164</sup>

Both the cost of not investing in the children with the greatest needs and the benefits of investing in them have been studied. In particular, it has been found that investing in early childhood programmes for the youngest children from low-income families has the highest return on investment. Holding the promise of overcoming social disadvantages and breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty,<sup>165</sup> such programmes can lead to benefits later in life in terms of cognition, language, socio-emotional health, education and access to the labour market<sup>166</sup> for the individual child.

163 White paper to the Norwegian Parliament no. 17 (2015–2016) ‘Safety and care: Foster homes in the best interest of the child’

164 UNICEF ‘For Every Child, a Fair Chance’ 2015

165 <https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/evaluations/wb-support-early-childhood-development>

166 IEG Working paper 2015/3. ‘Later impacts of Early Childhood Interventions: A Systematic Review’ and ACPF ‘The African Report on Child Wellbeing: Budgeting for Children’ 2010

**“Enabling children to develop their physical, cognitive, language and socio-emotional potential, particularly in the three first years of life, has rates of return of 7–10 per cent across the life course through better education, health, sociability, economic outcomes and reduced crime”.**

James Heckman, Winner of the Nobel Prize in Economy in the Year 2000<sup>167</sup>

The multiple rights violations that children who have lost parental care or are at risk of losing it have been shown throughout this report. No studies have been identified by this report showing positive effects on investing in children without parental care or at risk of losing it. However, these children are globally amongst the most deprived children. Consequently, placing them at the centre of early development programmes, adolescent health and development programmes and similar interventions, means that both the children themselves and society would benefit from investing in them. Failing to do so means they might fall further behind, equity gaps would widen and possibly reproduce the social disadvantages and intergenerational transmissions of poverty that the international community and Norwegian government are trying to overcome.

167 <http://heckmanequation.org/content/resource/4-big-benefits-investing-early-childhood-development>

## COSTS OF NOT INVESTING IN THE CHILDREN WITH THE GREATEST NEEDS

- 1 in 3 children fail to reach their full physical, cognitive, psychological and/or socio-economic potential due to poverty, poor health and nutrition, insufficient care and stimulation and other risk factors to early childhood development.

### **Violence:**

- 60 % of children across the globe experience domestic violence, almost 80 % across the 12 focus countries
- 50 % of sexual assaults is committed to girls under 16 years of age
- 1 in 10 girls under the age of 20 have been victims of sexual violence

In 2014, violence against children was estimated to cost the society US\$7 trillion, which is higher than the investment required to prevent much of that violence. In the US alone, the total lifetime cost of child maltreatment, including health care, child welfare, criminal justice, and the value of lost future productivity and earnings are thought to be US\$124 billion every year.

### **Hazardous child labour:**

- 5,4 % of children worldwide are involved in hazardous child labour
- 85,7 million 5-17 year olds are working in dangerous conditions

Hazardous child labour and the worst forms of child labour may result in bad health; exposure to other forms of violence and has a negative effect on future income-generating activities.

### **Children in armed forces and emergency situations:**

- Between 250.000 and 300.000 children were in the year 2000 involved in armed forces or groups, probably an underestimation, according to the UN

Children associated with armed forces or groups and in emergency contexts are also at increased risk of violence, sexual assaults and abduction, child trafficking, psychosocial violence and extreme forms of child labour. As a result, costs may be related to both short- and long-term medical treatment, psychological impacts, loss of productivity and income and death.

Sources: WHO Global Strategy Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health 2016-2030; UN Towards a World Free from Violence 2013; UNICEF Tanzania et al., 2011; UNICEF Hidden in plain sight 2014, Overseas Development Institute and Child focus alliance: The costs and economic impact of violence against children. 2014

## BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN THE CHILDREN WITH THE GREATEST NEEDS

### **Education:**

- Each year of education, on average, is associated with an 18 per cent higher GDP per capita

### **Violence:**

- According to the European Union, every euro invested in preventing violence produces a social return of € 87.6

### **Health and development:**

- WHO expects at least a 10-fold return on investments (in early childhood development) and at least US\$100 billion in demographic dividends from investments in early childhood and adolescent health and development.

### **Early childhood development:**

- Harvard Center for Childhood Development in 2009 estimated that there would be US\$4-9 \$ in return for every dollar invested in early childhood programmes, such as high-quality early childhood programmes, in terms of increase in earnings for the persons involved and public returns in terms of reduced special education, welfare and crime costs, and increased tax revenues from programme participants later in life
- Enabling children to develop their physical, cognitive, language and socio-emotional potential, particularly in the three first years of life, has rates of return of 7-10 per cent across the life course through better education, health, sociability, economic outcomes and reduced crime.

### **Parenting interventions:**

- Positive effects have also been seen of investing in parenting interventions for reducing harsh/abusive parenting, increase positive parenting, home visitations and improving parent-child relationships have been shown in middle- and low-income countries alike

Sources: UNICEF For Every Child a Fair Chance 2015, WHO Global Strategy Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health 2016-2030, <http://developingchild.harvard.edu>, <http://heckmanequation.org>, Overseas Development Institute and Child focus alliance: The costs and economic impact of violence against children. 2014 UN 'Towards a World Free from Violence' 2013

## Effective interventions in combination with integrated and context-specific child protection systems

The UN Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children provide a good framework for developing interventions that could prevent children from falling out of care as well as benefit children without parental care. Taking into account the multiple interrelated causes of losing parental care, there is a need for holistic strategies that ensure that families and caregivers can support their children at home, provide appropriate support to all children and create a protective community environment for all children.

“Drumming together for change”, perhaps the most comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of the Guidelines, recommends providing support at three levels:<sup>168</sup>

1. Access to basic services, social justice and protection of rights without discrimination, including universal birth registration without which children are more vulnerable to human rights violations
2. Social protection programmes/safety nets
  - Employment and income generation
  - Cash and material, school fees and medical care, social transfers, safety net programmes
  - Family strengthening programmes
  - Supportive social services
3. Actions taken when no other options are available, with a special focus on family reintegration

Active involvement of local communities, families and children should be encouraged at all times to ensure independence rather than creating a culture of dependency on social support.<sup>169</sup> In addition, NGOs should be encouraged to be cooperative and accountable. There should also be a focus on transitions into adulthood, with education and training, emotional and practical support, encouragement of industry and governments to create job opportunities, with a view to fulfil not only the UNCRC, but also the Human Rights Conventions, ensuring that the most vulnerable adults are protected.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>168</sup> SOS CVI et al. ‘Drumming together for change’ 2015, supported by other reports, like Dealman, B et al. ‘Effective interventions and strategies for improving early child development’ *BMJ* 2015;351:h4029

<sup>169</sup> SOS CVI et al. ‘Drumming together for change’ 2015

<sup>170</sup> Several reports on care-leavers indicate that there is a higher chance of children without parental care become dependent on social security benefits. SOS CVI ‘Tracking footprints’ 2010, SOS CVI ‘When care ends’ 2010.

Provision of both social and economic support to families varies greatly across different regions,<sup>171</sup> which calls for coordinated, context-specific and community based interventions.<sup>172</sup> While children without parental care or at risk of losing it might have some common characteristics as a group, provisions need to take into consideration the individual situation and needs of each child. There is also need for awareness-raising at all levels, imparting information and educational support on child development and child-rearing for parents.

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**“When the most deprived children do not have a fair chance to realize their rights, they fall further behind and equity gaps widen”**

UNICEF, *For Every Child a Fair Chance* 2015

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UNICEF has developed a toolkit for providing integrated social protection systems to children, where “integrated social protection systems” are defined as “the set of public and private policies and programmes aimed at preventing, reducing and eliminating economic and social vulnerabilities to poverty and deprivation”<sup>173</sup>: Social transfers, programmes to ensure access to services, social support and care services, legislation and policy reform to ensure equity and non-discrimination go hand in hand to provide a safety net around families at risk of breaking down and the children who are at risk of losing their parental care.

Such an integrated social protection system should also include capacity-building of staff in child rights, child protection strategies, non-violent conflict resolution strategies and knowledge to be able to act upon early signs of vulnerability, violence, neglect and abuse. Coupled with knowledge of the local community, trained staff can follow up in a culturally sensitive manner. Home visitations have proved effective in preventing child abuse and neglect, and have been shown to improve the health and well-being of children.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Daly, Mary ‘Family and parenting support: policy and provision in a global context’ UNICEF Innocenti 2015

<sup>172</sup> Zoll, Miriam ‘Can Global Development Dollars Do More to Improve care for Orphans and the Most Vulnerable Children?’ Center for Global Development 2011, Save the Children et al. ‘Protect my future: The links between child protection and good governance’ 2013

<sup>173</sup> UNICEF ‘Integrated Social Protection Systems – Enhancing Equity for Children’ 2012

<sup>174</sup> UN ‘Towards a World Free from Violence’ 2013

# 5 | Children without parental care or at risk of losing parental care as a target group in the international and Norwegian development agenda

The UN institutions, the World Bank and the Norwegian government all organize, fund or coordinate initiatives that target some of the root causes and vulnerabilities of the families at risk of breaking down or being separated, and can therefore benefit children who are at risk of losing parental care. However, children without parental care are usually mentioned only as part of projects taking place in specific countries targeting other groups like children affected (or orphaned) by HIV/AIDS, mother-child health, adolescent health or education, empowerment of women, water and sanitation or Early Childhood Development (ECD).<sup>175</sup>

Norway has a long tradition of supporting children's rights, and was the first country in the world to establish a Children's Ombudsperson. Norwegian politicians are invited to speak about children's rights in international fora, and Norway is a frontrunner in global initiatives, such as the Global Financing Facility,<sup>176</sup> the Every Woman Every Child initiative and the Global Vaccination Alliance.<sup>177</sup> On the national level, Norway has a strong child protection mechanism in place to ensure that children without care or at risk of losing parental care are given adequate support, and the government acknowledges that interventions to ensure that children grow up in their family, in particularly during the first three years, have both individual and long-term socio-economic benefits.<sup>178</sup>

Human rights have been established as a transversal issue for Norwegian development aid, and children's rights to

survival and development are deemed necessary to enable the implementation of the UNCRC. Even so, their rights seem somewhat underdeveloped in these policies.<sup>179</sup> There is little evidence to show that their right to growing up in a nurturing family environment is a priority, and children seem to be regarded as part of a household or a family. While acknowledging that many children still live a life far below the standards of the UNCRC,<sup>180</sup> few concrete actions are described in terms of giving them a chance to catch up, apart from providing education to marginalised groups.

Internationally, orphanhood, in particular HIV/AIDS orphans, was high on the global development agenda at the beginning of the century<sup>181</sup> and the World Bank launched a "Toolkit for OVC in Sub-Saharan Africa".<sup>182</sup> A new UNICEF report was commissioned in 2015, focusing on the "evolving realities of the AIDS crisis", targeting a range of factors that render children vulnerable other than orphanhood as such.<sup>183</sup> Updated figures on root causes are needed, and it is positive that other factors are sought, since "orphans" make up only a small part of children who are without parental care. Even so, one might hope that the commissioned report will not be limited to children affected by HIV/AIDS, but will have a broader focus on all children without parental care or at risk of losing it.

175 The Norwegian government has a general focus on children in relation to education, early childhood programmes and education, and poor children are defined as a group falling behind. In addition, children are a target group for health-related issues.

176 <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/Norsk-stotte-til-FNs-nye-barekraftsmal/id2001829/>

177 <http://www.gavi.org>

178 White Paper no. 17 to the Norwegian Parliament (2015–2016) 'Safety and care: Foster homes in the best interest of the child'

179 White paper no 10 to the Norwegian Parliament (2014–2015) 'Possibilities for all: human rights as the goal and means in the foreign and developmental policies'. Universal civil, human and political rights, fighting violence and discrimination, eradicating poverty, ensuring vaccines and education for all, in particular for girls, support for vulnerable groups (e.g. religious minorities, persons with disabilities, and LHBT persons) as well as contributing to good governance, peace and stability are at the centre of the Norwegian government's development policies.

180 Ibid

181 For instance, UNAIDS and USAID in 2004 published 'Children of the Brink, a joint report of new orphan estimates and a framework for action'

182 <http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/162495/> there seems to be little update on or evaluation of use of the toolkit since its launch

183 [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_45279.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_45279.html)

# KENYA CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME

The Kenya Cash Transfer Scheme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children is probably the most well-known programme and is partly funded by the World Bank, designed for the ultra-poor households.<sup>184</sup>

By 2015, 240.000 households and 480.000 children in Kenya were benefitting from cash transfers.

Results: the transfer improved overall consumption, a 36 % reduction in absolute poverty and an increase in food and health expenditure in the short term.<sup>185</sup>

The youth who had lived in households that received cash transfers were 24 % less likely to have depressive symptoms, in particular for those who had lost one or both parents, and young men in these households were also more likely to feel physically healthier and have more hope and optimism.<sup>186</sup>

Being without parental care seems to be mentioned as one of many rights violations rather than a defining factor for children in street situations, in trafficking and in labour. Children without parental care or at risk of losing it are also among target groups in the global drive to end violence against children<sup>187</sup> where a need for further documentation is defined in the follow-up report from 2013.<sup>188</sup> Several recommendations are relevant for the prevention of family-child separation and family breakdown.

The main priority for the Norwegian government in fulfilling the rights of the child seems to be education,<sup>189</sup> where reaching those *in the highest need* is a priority. However, children without parental care or at risk of losing it are not mentioned. Acknowledging that efficiency in implementation of initiatives is key, universal education in a life-long perspective and transition into the labour

market are seen as important factors for economic growth and development. Special attention is given to low-income countries, weak states and conflict areas, where initiatives providing alternative school will be supported. Children at risk of losing parental care can be seen as an indirect target as members of “poor families”, defined by certain risks: children might have to work to maintain the family’s livelihood; girls; (low) access to nutrition; ethnic minorities; children with disabilities; and children in war situations.

On a more positive note, in 2014, 137 countries worked on strengthening child protection systems, an increase from 74 in 2013, focusing in particular on enhancing capacity of social welfare workers, standard-setting and budgeting for child protection. In terms of budgeting for child protection, the global community spent US\$50 mill in 2014 on strengthening families and communities, where 52 % was spent on child-sensitive social protection to prevent and reduce vulnerability/exclusion in 13 UNICEF-supported countries, 15 % was spent on alternative care, 2 % was spent on children with disabilities and 1 % was spent on parenting programmes.

Apart from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which consistently reminds the Member States of using the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (UN Guidelines) in providing care and support to children without parental care or are at risk of losing it, the UN Guidelines are rarely part of policy instruments. Even so, evidence can be found that the Guidelines are taken into consideration when designing appropriate provisions for children in need of alternative care.<sup>190</sup> In addition, the Guidelines are taken into account by the Council of Europe,<sup>191</sup> the European Commission<sup>192</sup> and the African Union.

While it seems that children without parental care or at risk of losing it is not a specific target group for the Norwegian development policy, Norway is active in a number of transnational networks, where children without care are in focus. For instance, in the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality are active in the working group “children at risk”, contributing to initiatives with children and young people in institutions as well as in developing a tool for monitoring institutions for children and young people.<sup>193</sup> Furthermore, The EEA Grants provide a considerable amount of financial and bilateral support to programmes on Children and youth at risk in Europe.<sup>194</sup>

184 The basic criteria for the ultra-poor households was the presence of at least one orphan or vulnerable child (OVC), with at least one deceased parent, or whose parent or caregiver is chronically ill.

185 More info about best practices initiatives can be found on: <http://millionssaved.cgdev.org>

186 UNICEF Innocenti research brief 2016-02 ‘Cash Transfers Improve the Mental Health and Well-being of Youth: Evidence from the Kenyan Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children’

187 UN ‘Study on Violence Against Children’ 2006

188 UN ‘Towards a World Free from Violence’ 2013

189 White paper no 25 to the Norwegian Parliament (2013-2014) ‘Education for development’

190 For instance, the Guidelines are used as a standard in WHO ‘Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021’ and although not mentioned specifically, the UN report ‘Towards a World Free from Violence’ 2013 have goals which reflect the recommendations given in the UN Guidelines.

191 Children without parental care is a central target group for the Council of Europe ‘Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016-2021’

192 For instance, the European Commission Recommendation (2013/112/EU) ‘Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage’

193 AudTrain – System Based Audit of Alternative Care for Children.

194 <http://eeagrants.org/What-we-do/Programme-areas/Human-and-social-development/Children-and-youth-at-risk>

# 6 | Conclusions and recommendations

## Conclusions

**“Failing to invest sustainably in essential services and protection for every child does not just deny today’s children their rights, but will have detrimental effects for generations to come”**

UNICEF For Every Child, a Fair Chance 2015

Children’s rights and well-being are acknowledged as important for long-term sustainable development by international organisations and the Norwegian government alike. Even so, this report finds that children without parental care or at risk of losing it appear not to be among the target groups, and their situation is neither well documented nor well understood. Rather, children seem, both in policies and for statistical purposes, to be considered a part of a family or a household. Furthermore, “vulnerable children”, a category that might to a certain degree include children without parental care or at risk of losing it, in many cases goes undefined.

This report finds that there is a general lack of documentation of children’s situation and the situation for children without parental care or at risk of losing it in particular. As a consequence, where interventions are implemented, there is a risk of underachievement in terms of intended outcomes for donors, national governments, communities and for the individual child.<sup>195</sup> Investing in the most disadvantaged children, on the other hand, giving them the possibility to develop in a nurturing environment to their full potential, can give a return on investment of up to US\$4-10 for every US\$1 invested. In particular, it has been found that investing in early childhood programmes for the youngest children from low-income families have the highest return on investment. Holding the promise of overcoming social disadvantages and breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty,<sup>196</sup> such programmes can lead to benefits later in life in terms of cognition, language, socio-emotional health, education, and the labour market.<sup>197</sup>

With the complex web of multiple rights violations that children without parental care or at risk of losing it

195 See Annex 1

196 <https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/evaluations/wb-support-early-childhood-development>

197 IEG Working paper 2015/3 ‘Later impacts of Early Childhood Interventions: A Systematic Review’, ACPF ‘The African Report on Child Wellbeing: Budgeting for Children’ 2010

experience, the consequences can be detrimental to their individual physical, cognitive, emotional and psychological development. However, their situation can also have detrimental effects for generations to come, in terms of lost lives, wasted potential and reduced productivity, and subsequently a risk of slowing or reversing global development progress.<sup>198</sup>

### Main challenges

The main challenges identified in this report mirror the challenges identified by the wide range of the sources examined for this report:<sup>199</sup>

- 1) Almost all countries in the world have ratified the UNCRC, and many have legislation in place. However, it seems the legislation in many cases is not implemented; it is unconsolidated, fragmented and poorly enforced.<sup>200</sup> There are low levels of investment in children in general, and in child protection and prevention mechanisms in particular, as well as in child-sensitive justice, support, report and complaint mechanisms. The causes are identified as weak leadership in terms of implementation of legislation, planning and coordination, low financial and human resources set aside for providing for children and families in adequate ways and a lack of data and information to inform evidence-based planning and policy-making.<sup>201</sup> The UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children are seldom mentioned, documentation is scarce, even if traces of the recommendations provided in them are found.
- 2) Although international and national policies might exist for fulfilling international goals, they target children in general, not defining which factors make children “vulnerable”. There is insufficient attention to the particularly vulnerable children and the children without parental care or at risk of losing it. Targets, monitoring and evaluations are focused on singular issues and there is inadequate recognition of children’s cumulative rights violations. This may jeopardize a more holistic approach to analysis and interventions

198 UNICEF ‘For Every Child a Fair Chance’ 2015

199 UN ‘Towards a World Free from Violence’ 2013, UNICEF ‘For every child a fair chance’ 2015, SOS CVI et al. ‘Drumming together for change’

200 UN ‘Towards a World Free from Violence’ 2013

201 Ibid: Only 24 % of the countries responding had financial or human resources allocated to address violence against children

that would benefit children's development. The focus on household surveys mean that the children who are without parental care, and therefore possibly not part of a household, might be excluded both in data collection and provision of interventions.

- 3) The evidence examined for this report suggests that the way that development aid is given can influence the policy choices made by the cooperating countries. Concentrating on fulfilling the expectations and targets decided by external donors, which might release further funding and investment, might become a higher priority than investing in interventions that could benefit the national and local community or individual children and families. Counting the number of children who have been enrolled in school or who have been vaccinated might benefit those children, but children who do not have parents, other adults or siblings to bring them to school or vaccination facilities might lose out. Similarly, external pressure may lead states to get legislation in place, rather than implement legislation and monitor and evaluate implementation. As a result, interventions and policies might not meet the targets hoped for, and the situation for children might not change for the better, even if this result might be invisible to donors and the global community.
- 4) Documentation of the situation of children in general, and children without parental care or at risk of losing parental care in particular, is scarce. In some countries, the documentation is lacking completely. There is a lack of coordination in terms of data gathering and presentation of statistical information on children, where multiple databases with multiple sets of indicators make it difficult to get an overview of their situation. Furthermore, the multitude of guidelines, policies and strategies that exist within the global community might be a challenge for governments to choose from if they want to develop sound child policies and reach children with adequate interventions.
- 5) Global initiatives seem to often target the same group of children, a situation where the children most in need of the interventions might not be targeted, such as children without parental care or at risk of losing it.

## Recommendations

To ensure that children's right to a nurturing upbringing is fulfilled, giving them the possibility to develop to reach their full potential and to contribute towards sustainable development as full members of society, further efforts are needed to place children's rights at the centre of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, governance and funding:

- 1) In-depth knowledge of child populations, in particular vulnerabilities, and national policy frameworks is essential for targeted individual and global development initiatives
- 2) Coordinated efforts and long-term, knowledge-based policies are key to end multiple rights violations against children
- 3) Placing children at the centre of "good governance" from global to local level
- 4) Further quantitative and qualitative research is needed on the situation of children without parental care or at risk of losing it

### 1) IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD POPULATION, IN PARTICULAR VULNERABILITIES, AND NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TARGETED INDIVIDUAL AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

**Assessments are necessary – otherwise legislation and good-will is only that, and do not cause any changes to the better for vulnerable groups of children**

UN Towards a World Free from Violence 2013

With a lack of information on children in general and the most vulnerable families and children without care in particular, neither the states themselves nor the international community can get an overview of what the needs are for different groups of children. Consequently, establishing effective policies and provision of services that make a change for the better in children's lives can be difficult. There is therefore a need for to carry out coordinated, consistent and disaggregated data collection on the local, national and global level.

Donor countries and international organisations should:

- 1) **Demand that countries provide quantitative and qualitative documentation on their child population**, including vulnerable families and children without parental care; and that **policies** developed on the global, regional, national and local level are **based on this knowledge**. Where such knowledge does not exist – donor countries should **provide funding** for knowledge-gathering;
- 2) Make data collection, monitoring and evaluation of the situation of the child population a **top priority in bilateral and multilateral cooperation** on good governance, policy building, implementation of legislation and concrete interventions;

- 3) Ensure that, before providing support, cooperation and funding, **they themselves have in-depth country-specific knowledge of the child population**, including vulnerable families and children without parental care, as well as an understanding of the national policies and legislative frameworks for fulfilling children's rights;
- 4) Make certain that **knowledge** of the child population, including vulnerable families and children without parental care, **form the basis of interventions, so that all children are reached**, no one is left behind or forgotten, and so that the initiatives truly work towards the goals that they are designed to meet;
- 5) **Support UNICEF and UN Member States<sup>202</sup> in collecting evidence on children's well-being** in a coordinated manner – in particular on the groups of children that fall behind, and ensure that efforts are made to gather information on children who are not part of households, who have lost parental care and do not have adults who can report adequately on their behalf.

## 2) COORDINATED EFFORTS AND LONG-TERM, KNOWLEDGE-BASED POLICIES ARE KEY TO END MULTIPLE RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN

The multiple rights violations that children without care or at risk of losing it experience place them at the centre of the term “vulnerable children”. Even so, they are rarely mentioned among vulnerable children. The cumulative rights violations they experience both as cause and as consequence of their demise, mean their needs cannot be met by simply expanding one single effort or service. Their situation demands a complex assessment, and targeted interventions that are multi-disciplinary, systemic and holistic rather than focused on singular issues. For instance, interventions for vaccination, health or education, or a cash-transfer scheme to vulnerable families might reach some of these children. However, if external donors, national governments or NGOs do not give special attention to children who might not be accounted for because they are without parental care, on the street, at work or in institutions, these children might not be able to benefit from the interventions put in place.

Similarly, the evidence examined for this report suggests that where national systems for providing services to children, including children without parental care or at risk of losing it, are based on external funding, they might collapse if the funding is withdrawn or even reduced just slightly.<sup>203</sup>

<sup>202</sup> Where the Statistics Norway have contributed to capacity-building in a number of countries

<sup>203</sup> For instance, the UNDAF Afghanistan 2015–2019 points out that without action taken by the government, the long-term sustainability of developmental policies and actions is jeopardized

## SOUTH AFRICA CHILD WELFARE PROGRAMME (CSG)

The South Africa Child Welfare Programme, fully funded by the South African government, by 2012 reached more than 75 % of all eligible children in South Africa, amounting to 11 million children. The programme has shown that the effects were particularly significant for children who enrolled at age 6 or younger.

**Results:** Improved child nutrition, more schooling and less child labour, and the children were more likely to possess formal identity documents.

**Challenges:** Despite wide coverage, the most vulnerable children are falling behind, mostly because the caregivers need to provide the government with documentation to conduct the eligibility tests when applying for enrolment. Assessments suggest that conditionality might keep the most disadvantaged residents from accessing support from this programme.

Source: <http://millionsaved.cgdev.org>

To implement global policy commitments and goals, the evidence points to the following recommendations:

- 1) **International organisations and policy-makers must coordinate their efforts** in policy- and guidance development, data collection and interventions. Multi-stakeholder cooperation between and within multilateral organisations, national governments, NGOs and private actors and service-providers alike<sup>204</sup> is vital, so that children without parental care or at risk of losing it are placed at the heart of policy-making at global, regional and national level and can have their rights fulfilled;
- 2) International organisations, donor countries, national governments, NGOs and private actors must place children' right to a nurturing upbringing to the centre of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, where stronger focus on and support for **long-term goals with**

<sup>204</sup> IEG Working paper 2015/3 'Later impacts of Early Childhood Interventions: A Systematic Review'. World Bank 2015

**knowledge-based interventions, with long-term and sustainable funding**<sup>205</sup> should be maintained;

3) **Making global goals and commitments into concrete actions** that will benefit children without parental care and vulnerable families at risk of breaking down should be a **top priority** for the global community, donor countries, national governments and NGOs alike. Investing in programmes targeting these children, hold the promise of individual developmental gains with long-term positive effects on individual lives, for future generations, and 4-10 times returns on investments. The evidence points to the following concrete actions that need to be taken:

- **Systematic knowledge-gathering** on what the needs of children are, consistent monitoring of the situation for all children, in particular the most vulnerable children;
- Perform **legislative reviews** in terms of developing child policies and legislation and implementing those policies; monitoring and evaluation of the implementation; ensuring that the legislation defines a child as being under 18 years; ensuring funding for child protection, safety nets and social support;
- **Capacity-building and good coordination** on all levels of public administration and ensure good coordination with non-state organisations where these provide services to children;
- **Ensuring universal and free birth registration** and issuing of birth certificates, including for the hard-to-reach and vulnerable children, so that all children can claim their basic human rights and services;
- **Providing universal, safe and free basic services**, and making efforts to ensure that all children are, in fact, included – also the children who are not part of households, without parental care, live on the streets, in poor families with bad health/illness and/or low education levels; in child-headed households; in marriages or unions; in institutions; in domestic or other child labour;
- **Providing**
  - accountable and well-staffed integrated child protection services,<sup>206</sup> including tracking and monitoring children without parental care or at risk of losing it and improve the quality of care in all child care settings, with special attention to unregistered

institutional settings, as the UN Guidelines recommend;

- sustainable support to families so that they can provide for their children both on the practical level and on the emotional and developmental level;
  - child friendly justice and legislation, reporting and complaints mechanisms;
  - early childhood development programmes;
  - employment opportunities and follow-up of young people in the transition to independence and adulthood, where all actors play an important role, including private industry;
- **Actively engage local communities, families and children in developing policies** and raising awareness to also reach the children who are not part of a system;

### **3) PLACING CHILDREN AT THE CENTRE OF “GOOD GOVERNANCE” FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL LEVEL**

Child rights governance can be defined as good governance for children – so that each and every child can fulfil their rights to a safe and nurturing childhood, and so that the society can reap the benefits of their development in terms of increased productivity and avoidance of the long-term cost of cycles of social exclusion. Investing in the most vulnerable and deprived children, where the children without parental care or at risk of losing it are particularly vulnerable, is beneficial to global sustainable development, because investment in these children creates a benefit not only to them, but also for future generations. Failing to invest sustainably in essential services for every child has detrimental effects for generations to come, and risks slowing or reversing the progress that the international community has seen during the last 15 years.

The priorities of the international community and external donors play an important role in shaping the receiving countries' priorities. Consequently, they can push countries with which they cooperate to place children's rights at the forefront of their governance structure, where good governance for children is “sound administration of financial resources – for children”, “responsible economic policy – for children”, “zero tolerance of corruption – in delivering services to children”. In this way, governments can be pushed to meet every child's needs, in particular the needs of children who are without parental care and therefore might not have anyone to look out for them.

The evidence points to the following recommendations:

- 1) International organisations and donor countries should **place children's rights and needs at the forefront of advocacy and policy-development** as a top priority;

205 ACPF 'African Report on Violence Against Children' 2014 and 'Strengthening Child Protection Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa' 2012

206 UNICEF 'Integrated Social Protection Systems' 2012

- 2) Before receiving political support, funding, collaboration and interventions, a government should be able to **prove that they have in-depth knowledge of children's situation in their country**, including vulnerabilities, and that knowledge-based and relevant **legislation, policies and funding** are in place for providing for all children in their country, with special attention to families at risk of breaking down and children who have lost parental care. Implementation of effective and accountable child protection system, birth registration routines and universal and free basic services should be a top priority in bilateral and multilateral cooperation.
- 3) International organisations and donor countries should **target and measure successful implementation of initiatives, legislation, policies and interventions** in terms of **qualitative outcome for individual children** and the community, rather than (just) quantitative outcomes for the national government, external donor or global community. Special attention should be held at not losing sight of the children who are without parental care, who might be unaccounted for, and therefore might not be targeted by specific interventions focusing on singular issues.

#### **4) FURTHER QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IS NEEDED ON THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN WITHOUT PARENTAL CARE OR AT RISK OF LOSING IT**

This report represents a desktop study of a wide range of sources that are publicly available. While the aim has been to give an overview of the situation of children without parental care or at risk of losing it and reflecting on the international attention to these two groups of children, this report only scratches the surface. There is a need for further investigation, in particular in the following areas:

- 1) **Methodologically rigorous quantitative and qualitative studies on the particular vulnerabilities of children without parental care or at risk of losing parental care:** Across its 12 focus countries, the Norwegian government should fund and ensure that such studies are carried out, in particular in countries with a high number of children who are living without one or both parents, such as Malawi; where the national situation is such that there are high risks to children and families, such as in Afghanistan and many of the other focus countries; and in countries which lack documentation on the child population, such as Haiti, Myanmar and Tanzania;
- 2) **Analysing existing statistical information** in MICS and other statistical datasets, linking different parameters to get more information on relevant vulnerabilities and the child population;

- 3) **Examining the role** that international institutions, external governmental and non-governmental donors and service providers play in terms of **governance** for children in general and for children without care or at risk of losing parental care in particular;
- 4) **Coordinated investigation into the global implementation of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in Member States**, in particular concerning: improvements in laws and policies in line with the Guidelines have occurred; development of family policies to strengthen the capacities of parents and caregivers to better care for and protect children; mechanisms in policies and practices for prevention of unnecessary separation of children from their families; provision of diverse, adequate and family-based alternative care options; decision-making with the best interests of the individual child at heart.
- 5) **The Norwegian government should evaluate the effect that their development and foreign policies** and funded interventions **have** on vulnerable groups of children, on implementation of the children's rights and in shaping child rights governance in the countries with which they cooperate.

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# Annex 1

Child statistics across the 12 countries prioritized by Norwegian governmental aid

The figures reflect the most recent figures found in the UNICEF Multi Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)<sup>207</sup> or State of the World's Children 2014 and 2015 (SWC 2014 or 2015).<sup>208</sup> The most recent figure is cited, and where appropriate, figures from both sources are cited, the most recent figure is used to provide the mean figure across the 12 countries. The State of the World's Children in most cases cite figures which are from 2013 or older. Therefore,

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<sup>207</sup> <http://mics.unicef.org>

<sup>208</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/sowc/>

where there are MICS from 2014 or 2015, these are selected for comparison. Where older figures are cited, this is because no recent figures exist, and they have been tagged as old. The State of the World's Children 2015 also notes that some figures are out of date or not collected a manner which is consistent with the data collection for the other figures. Where such figures are cited, they are not part of estimations or mean figures. In some cases, where other documentation has provided information, this is cited, or information concerning gaps between the rich and poor populations are given.

	MEAN FOR NORWAY'S 12 PRIORITY COUNTRIES	AFGHANISTAN	HAITI (NO MICS AVAILABLE)	MALI	STATE OF PALESTINE	SOMALIA (MICS 2011 FOR 1. NORTH EAST AND 2. SOMALILAND	SOUTH SUDAN	ETHIOPIA	MALAWI	MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	NEPAL	TANZANIA
Total population (in thousands)	348 904	30 552	10 317	15 002	4 326	10 496	11 296	94 101	16 363	25 842	53 259	27 797	49 253
Percentage of population under 5 years' old	14	SWC 2015: 16	SWC 2015: 12	MICS 2015: 16.9 % SWC 2015: 19	MICS 2014: 14.3 SWC 2015: 14	SWC 2015: 10	MICS 2010: 17.9 SWC 2015: 15	SWC 2015: 15	MICS 2014: 16.0 SWC 2015: 17	2013 SWC: 17	MICS 2010: 10.4 SWC 2015: 8	MICS 2014: 10.1 SWC 2015: 10	SWC 2015: 17
Percentage of population under 18 years' old	47	SWC 2015: 54	SWC 2015: 41	MICS 2015: 54.3 % SWC 2015: 53	MICS: 46.3 SWC 2015: 47	SWC 2015: 54	MICS 2010: 57.1 SWC 2015: 48	SWC 2015: 49	MICS 2015: 54.0 SWC 2015: 52	2013 SWC: 51	MICS 2010: 35.4 SWC 2015: 30	MICS 2014: 40.2 SWC 2015: 41	SWC 2015: 31
Living under poverty line (percentage of total population)		36 (UNDAF 2015-2019)	SWC 2015: 62 (old/ inadequately collected)	MICS 2015: 50	MICS 2014: 0			MICS 1995: 31	MICS 2014: 62	SWC 2015 (old/ inadequately collected): 60		MICS 2014: 25	MICS 1996: 68
Stunting (percentage of children 0-59 months)	35 (5 countries with figures older than 2010 not included)	60.5 (UNDAF 2015-2019)	SWC 2015: 22	MICS 2015 (old/ inadequately collected): 39	MICS 2014: 11	SWC 2015 (old/ inadequately collected): 42	MICS 2010: 31	MICS 1995: 44	MICS 2014: 48	MICS 2008: 45	MICS 2010: 35	MICS 2014: 41	MICS 1996: 35
Average household size		MICS 2011: 7.8		MICS 2015: 8.4	MICS 2014: 5.5	MICS 2011: 1.6 2-6.4	6		4.5			4.8	4.6
Children with disabilities (percentage)										14 (Source: national educational policy)			
Child mortality rate (MICS Ind. 1.4)				MICS 2015: 55/1000	MICS 2015: 41/000		)		MICS 2014: 33/000			MICS 2014: 51/000	
Under five mortality rate (MICS Ind. 1.5, MDG Ind. 4.1)	77/1000	SWC 2015: 97/1000	SWC 2015: 73/1000	MICS 2015: 108/000	MICS 2015: 221/000	SWC 2015: 146/1000	SWC 2015: 99/1000	SWC 2015: 64/1000	MICS 2014: 85/000 SWC 2015: 69/000	SWC 2015: 87/000	SWC 2015: 51/000	MICS 2014: 39/000	SWC 2015: 52/1000
Full immunization coverage (Percentage of children 12-23 months) (MICS Ind. 3.8)	43 (three countries have no information about this in the given statistics)	MICS 2011: 30		MICS 2015: 20	MICS 2014: 89.9	MICS 2011: 3.4 (Poorest: 1.3 richest: 5.4)	MICS 2010: 6.3 (Poorest: 2.3, richest: 14.6)		MICS 2014: 38.5	MICS 2008: 48	MICS 2010: 88.6	MICS 2014: 67.1	
Early child-bearing (percentage of girls who had at least one live child before turning 18) (MICS Ind. 5.2)	26 (one country with inadequate figure)	MICS 2011: 25.6 SWC 2015: 26	SWC 2015: 13	MICS 2015: 36 SWC 2015: 46	MICS 2014: 22 SWC 2015: 17	MICS 2011: 27.9 SWC 2015: No figure	MICS 2010: 25.9 SWC 2015: 28	SWC 2015: 22	MICS 2014: 31.3 SWC 2015: 35	SWC 2015: 40	SWC 2015: 13 (old/ inadequately collected)	MICS 2014: 16.0 SWC 2015: 22	SWC 2015: 28
Percentage of children in the appropriate age group who attend early childhood education (MICS Ind. 6.1)	19 (three countries have no information about this in the given statistics)	MICS 2011: 1.0 SWC 2015: 11 (poorest 0, richest 4)		MICS 2015: 5.3 SWC 2015: 10 (poorest: 1 richest: 40)	MICS 2014: 26.4 SWC 2015: 15 (poorest: 9 richest: 26)	MICS 2011: 1-1.7 2-2.8 2013 SWC: 2 (poorest: 1 richest: 6)	SWC 2015: 6 (poorest: 2 richest: 13)		MICS 2014: 39.2	MICS 2008: 22.9	MICS 2010: 22.9 (poorest: 16 richest: 46)	MICS 2014: 50.7 SWC 2015: 30 (poorest: 14 richest: 61)	
Support for learning: Percentage of children 36-59 months with whom an adult has engaged in four or more activities to promote learning and school readiness in the last 3 days (MICS Ind. 6.2)	61 (four countries have no information about this in the given statistics)	MICS 2011: 73.1		MICS 2015: 54 (9 % in the last three days) SWC 2015: 29	MICS 2014: 77.5 SWC 2015: 58	MICS 2011: 1-3.5 2-6.2 SWC 2015: 7.9			MICS 2014: 29.3	MICS 2008: 31 SWC 2015: 47	MICS 2010: 37.9 SWC 2015: 38	MICS 2014: 67.2	

	MEAN FOR NORWAY'S 12 PRIORITY COUNTRIES	AFGHANISTAN	HAITI (NO MICS AVAILABLE)	MALI	STATE OF PALESTINE	SOMALIA (MICS 2011 FOR 1. NORTH EAST AND 2. SOMALILAND)	SOUTH SUDAN	ETHIOPIA	MALAWI	MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	NEPAL	TANZANIA
Inadequate care: Percentage of children under 5 left alone or is looked after by child under 10 for 1 or more hours during the last week (MICS ind. 6.7)	29 (five countries have no information about this in the given statistics)	MICS 2011: 40.2 SWC 2015: 40 (poorest: 45, richest: 27)		MICS 2015: 32	MICS 2014: 14.3	MICS 2011: 1: 29.4 2: 21.5			MICS 2014: 37.1	MICS 2008: 32.5		MICS 2014: 20.6	
Early child development index: percentage of children 36–59 months who are developmentally on track in at least three of the following four domains: literacy-numeracy, physical, social-emotional, and learning (MICS ind. 6.8)				MICS 2015: 61.6	MICS 2014: 72	MICS 2011: 1: 34.9 2: 38.5			MICS 2014: 59.8			MICS 2014: 64.4	
Literacy rate among young women: Percentage of women 15-24 years old who are able to read a short, simple text) (MICS ind. 7.1, MDG 2.3)		MICS 2011: 22.2 SWC 2015: 32	SWC 2015: 70 (old/ inadequately collected)	SWC 2015: 39	MICS 2014: 97.2 SWC 2015: 99	MICS 2011: 1: 36.1 2: 44.1	MICS 2010: 13.4 (poorest: 4.3, richest: 29.0)	SWC 2015: 47 (old/ inadequately collected)	MICS 2014: 72.4 SWC 2015: 70	MICS 2008: 47 SWC 2015: 57	MICS 2010: 87.8 SWC 2015: 96	MICS 2014: 84 SWC 2015: 77	SWC 2015: 73
Net intake rate in primary education – percentage of children in school entry age (MICS ind. 7.3)	60 (three countries have no information about this in the given statistics)	MICS 2011: 29.0			MICS 2014: 96.9	MICS 2011: 1: 16.5 2: 20.6	MICS 2010: 11.2 (poorest: 8.2, richest: 25.9)	MICS 1996: 87.4	MICS 2014: 79.5	MICS 2008: 81	MICS 2010: 74.4	MICS 2014: 57.3	
Primary school net attendance ratio – percentage of children of primary school age who are attending primary or secondary school (MICS ind. 7.4, MDG 2.1)	64 (four countries have no information about this in the given statistics)	MICS 2011: 55.2			MICS 2014: 96.8	MICS 2011: 1: 45.4 2: 51.4	MICS 2010: 26.2		MICS 2014: 93.2	MICS 2008: 20	MICS 2010: 90.2	MICS 2014: 85.9	
Primary school net enrolment ratio (SWC)				SWC 2015: 73	SWC 2015: 93		SWC 2015: 41		SWC 2015: 97	SWC 2015: 86		SWC 2015: 98	
Birth registration: Percentage of children under 5 whose birth has been registered (MICS ind. 8.1)	45	MICS 2011: 37.4		SWC 2015: 80	MICS 2015: 87.2	SWC 2015: 3 (In the MICS it is commented that there are so few that there is no use in collecting these data)	MICS 2010: 35.4 (Poorest: 21.2, richest: 56.5) SWC 2015: 35	SWC 2015: 7	SWC 2015: 2	MICS 2008: 31 (Poorest: 19.5, richest: 47.7) SWC 2015: 48	MICS 2010: 72.4 SWC 2015: 72	MICS 2014: 58.1	SWC 2015: 16
Percentage of children 7-17 involved in some kind of labour (MICS ind. 8.2)	30 (two countries have no information about this) Cumulated across 8 countries: 16000	MICS 2011: 25.3 SWC 2015: 10	SWC 2015: 24	MICS 2015: 55.8 SWC 2015: 21	SWC 2015: 6	MICS 2011: 1: 26.2 2: 26.0 SWC 2015: 49		27.41	MICS 2014: 39.3 SWC 2015: 26	MICS 2008: 22 SWC 2015: 22		MICS 2014: 37.4 SWC 2015: 34	SWC 2015: 21
Percentage of children 1-14 who have suffered some form of physical or mental violence during last month (MICS ind. 8.3)	88	MICS 2011: 74.4	SWC 2015: 85	MICS 2015: 72.7	MICS 2013: 91.5 SWC 2015: 93	MICS 2011: 1: 75.2 2: 78.2			MICS 2014: 72.4			MICS 2014: 81.7	

	MEAN FOR NORWAY'S 12 PRIORITY COUNTRIES	AFGHANISTAN	HAITI (NO MICS AVAILABLE)	MALI	STATE OF PALESTINE	SOMALIA (MICS 2011 FOR 1. NORTH EAST AND 2. SOMALILAND)	SOUTH SUDAN	ETHIOPIA	MALAWI	MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	NEPAL	TANZANIA
Heritage before 15 years old (MICS Ind. 8.4)	11 (one country has no information about this in the given statistics)	MICS 2011: 15 SWC 2014: 15	SWC 2014: 3	MICS 2015: 16 SWC 2014: 15	MICS 2013: 2,1 SWC 2015: 2	MICS 2011: 1:12,1 2:8,7 1:38,1 2:30,8 SWC 2014: 8	MICS 2010: 6,9 SWC 2014: 9	2014 SWC: 16	MICS 2014: 10,3 SWC 2014: 12	MICS 2008: 18 SWC 2014: 14		MICS 2014: 15,5 SWC 2014: 10	SWC 2014: 7
Heritage before 18 years old (MICS Ind. 8.5)	41 (one country has no information about this in the given statistics)	MICS 2011: 46,3 SWC 2014: 40	SWC 2014: 18	MICS 2015: 48 SWC 2014: 55	MICS 2013: 24,2 SWC 2014: 21	MICS 2011: 45	MICS 2010: 44,8 SWC 2014: 52	2013 SWC: 41	MICS 2014: 49,9 SWC 2014: 50	MICS 2008: 52 SWC 2014: 48		MICS 2014: 48,4 SWC 2014: 41	SWC 2014: 37
Female genital mutilation (0-14 years old) according to mothers				MICS 2015: 76,4 SWC 2015: 74 In African Violence report: 89 (total of women)		MICS 2011: 1:25 (88% of the adult women population) 2:277 SWC 2015: 46		SWC 2015: 74 % of women, 24 % of girls	MICS 2014: Male circumcision: 27,5				SWC 2015: 3 July 2012 survey: 2,52% of 15 to 17 year and 9,6% of 18 to 24 year old girls reported being circumcised
0-17 years living without one or both parents (8.13)	9 (three countries have no information about this in the given statistics) Cumulative for the countries where statistics exist: 31,400,640	MICS 2011: 1,7 (probably)		MICS 2015: 9,2	MICS 2013: 0,6	MICS 2011: 1:121 1:121 2:119	MICS 2010: 13,2		MICS 2014: 16,7	MICS 2008: Without any biological parent: 15	MICS 2010: 5,4	MICS 2014: 4,8	
One or both parents dead (8.14)	9 (three countries have no information about this in the given statistics) Cumulative for the countries where statistics exist: 31,400,640	4,7		6,8	2,3	1:127 2:10,9	17,2		16,7				
One or both parents living abroad (8.15)				MICS 2015: 2,1	MICS 2013: 0,3				MICS 2014: 3,8			MICS 2014: 18,2	
Vulnerable children									MICS 2014: Girls: 14,7 boys: 18,2	MICS 2008: 6			
Sexual intercourse before age 15				MICS 2015: 13,8			MICS 2010: 10,5			MICS 2008: 29			
Ratio of children who go to school who have lost one or both parents compared to children who have not lost parents (MDG 6.4)		MICS 2011: School attendance in "orphans": 34,4 In non-orphans: 57,4	MDG 2012: Orphan school attendance rate: 91,8 Ratio: 0,96	MICS 2015: Ratio: 0,7	MICS 2015: "Orphan number too small to assess"	MICS 2011: School attendance in "orphans": 1:31,2 In non-orphans: 56,9 2:71,5 Non-orphans: 61,9	MICS 2010: School attendance in "orphans": 26,5 In non-orphans: 34,0 Ratio: 0,78	MDG 2011: Orphan school attendance: 68,9 Ratio: 0,9	MDG 2010: Orphan school attendance: 90,5 Ratio: 0,96	MDG 2011: Orphan school attendance: 90,5 Ratio: 0,91		MDG 2011: Orphan school attendance: 67,1 Ratio: 0,72	MDG 2012: Orphan school attendance: 84,0 Ratio: 0,95
Number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS			SWC 2015: 100	SWC 2015: 79		SWC 2015: 2400	SWC 2015: 100	SWC 2015: 900	SWC 2015: 790	SWC 2015: 810			SWC 2015: 300
Number children orphaned by all causes			SWC 2015: 100	SWC 2015: 100		SWC 2015: 3600	SWC 2015: 570	SWC 2015: 4000	SWC 2015: 1200	SWC 2015: 2100			SWC 2015: 300

1 [http://www.unicef.org/infpb/country/lethopia\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infpb/country/lethopia_statistics.html)

2 [http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/sites/default/files/consultations/better\\_data/presentations/ya\\_c\\_tanzania.pdf](http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/sites/default/files/consultations/better_data/presentations/ya_c_tanzania.pdf)

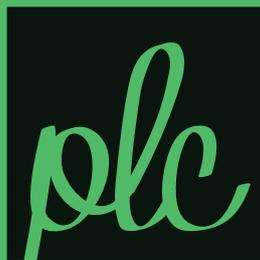
3 <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/ServletDetail.aspx?srnd=72&crd= and http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/ServletDetail.aspx?srnd=78&crd=>

# Annex 2

## Definitions of children without care or “vulnerable children” in various documents

ORGANISATION/DOCUMENT	VULNERABLE GROUPS OF CHILDREN
UN General Assembly Resolution 'Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children'. 2009 A/RES/64/142	Children without parental care defined as “all children not in the overnight care of at least one of their parents, for whatever reason and under whatever circumstances”
UNICEF, UNAIDS and USAID (2004) 'Children of the Brink, a joint report of new orphan estimates and a framework for action'	Children under 18 affected by HIV/AIDS
World bank toolkit for OVC for Sub-Saharan Africa (2005)	A child 0-17 who have lost one or both parents Vulnerable children include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Street children</li> <li>- Orphans</li> <li>- Children affected by HIV/AIDS</li> <li>- Children in hazardous labour</li> <li>- Children affected by conflict</li> <li>- Children living with a disability</li> </ul>
SOS Children's Villages International documentation	Main reasons for admission to SOS programme (family strengthening and care facilities combined): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Death of the mother</li> <li>- Death of the father</li> <li>- Poverty</li> <li>- Parental addiction</li> <li>- Child abuse</li> <li>- Domestic violence</li> <li>- Poor health</li> <li>- Gender based violence</li> <li>- Children in street situations</li> <li>- Child labour and commercial sexual exploitation</li> <li>- HIV/AIDS</li> <li>- Migration</li> </ul>
UNDAF Nepal 2013-2017	Does not mention children without parental care in particular <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Persons with disabilities</li> <li>- Children without basic education</li> <li>- Undernourished children</li> <li>- Migrant workers and their families</li> <li>- Those experiencing discrimination because of their caste, ethnic background or gender</li> </ul>
CR Committee Country report Malawi 2014	Orphan defined as “a person 15 years or below who has lost at least one of his/her parents”. National Social Support Policy will provide services to the ultra-poor and vulnerable, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the children without care or at a risk of losing it,</li> <li>- persons with disabilities</li> <li>- destitute families</li> <li>- out-of-school youths</li> </ul>
UN 'Draft UNDAF Annual report 2015 Malawi' 2016	Orphans and vulnerable groups in relation to HIV.
Malawi: National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children 2015-2019	Vulnerabilities defined in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Living in a household ranked in the bottom three wealth quintiles</li> <li>- Not living with either parent</li> <li>- Living in a household with adults with no education</li> <li>- Having lost one or both parents</li> <li>- Living with HIV</li> <li>- Living with a disability</li> </ul>

UNDAF for Tanzania 2011–2015	HIV/AIDS and vulnerable groups are considered the “Most vulnerable children” While focus on losing parental care, this is mostly considered as a consequence of HIV/AIDS.
CoE ‘Strategy for the rights of the child 2016–2021’	Children living with poverty Discrimination Several groups of children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- children with disabilities,</li> <li>- children without parental care,</li> <li>- children from minorities including Roma children,</li> <li>- children on the move or otherwise affected by migration,</li> <li>- children deprived of liberty,</li> <li>- children living and/or working on the streets and</li> <li>- children of imprisoned parents.</li> </ul>
European Commission Recommendation: Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage (2013/112/EU)	Focuses on children who face an increased risk due to multiple disadvantage such as Roma children, some migrant or ethnic minority children, children with special needs or disabilities, children in alternative care and street children, children of imprisoned parents, as well as children within households at particular risk of poverty, such as single parent or large families;
UNESCO: Education 2030 ‘Declaration for Action’	Defines vulnerable groups as “marginalised and vulnerable groups”: persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, and children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations or other status. It is not further defined what “those in a vulnerable situation or other status” might mean. (P 6). The strategy encompasses a life-long learning perspective, including early childhood development, but does not mention support for good parenting.
UNICEF website	Most disadvantaged children: including those living in fragile contexts, those with disabilities, those who are affected by rapid urbanization and those affected by environmental degradation.
UNICEF ‘For Every Child a Fair Chance’ 2015	Vulnerable children defined as: Those from the poorest households, girls, children with disabilities, migrant and refugee children, those living in remote areas, and children from ethnic or religious groups facing discrimination.
African Union: African charter on the rights and welfare of the child	Special provisions regarding children in armed conflict, refugee children, adoption, sexual exploitation, trafficking, abduction, children of imprisoned parents and in terms of separation from parents
White paper no. 10 to the Norwegian Parliament (2014–2015): Possibilities for all: human rights as the goal and means in the foreign and developmental policies.	Vulnerable groups: children and persons with disabilities
White paper no. 25 to the Norwegian Parliament (2013–2014) Education for development	Vulnerable poor families, where children have to work to maintain the family’s livelihood; girls; access to nutrition; ethnic minorities; and children with disabilities, children in war situations. Marginalised groups
White paper no. 17 to the Norwegian Parliament (2015–2016): Safety and care: Foster homes in the best interest of the child	Children who are placed in alternative care in Norway: causes might be drug abuse, mental illness and parents in conflict with the law. Apart from this, the white paper recommends that a national system for identifying children in need of foster care is developed. Vulnerable children are mentioned without further definition.
UN Sustainable Development Goals 2016	Providing education at all levels to all people, including: persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations. Eradicate forced labour and human trafficking, end child labour Factors which give rise to violence, insecurity, injustice: inequality, poor governance, illicit financial and arms flows Poorest and people in vulnerable situations (Those who) have been denied the chance to lead decent, dignified and rewarding lives and achieve their full human potential – end poverty Prevention and treatment of substance abuse All girls and boys have access to early childhood development, care and pre-primary education



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