



IACN QUARTERLY

IACN QUARTERLY - ISSUE 14, DECEMBER 2023

Hello,

Dear Colleagues,
The 14th edition of IACN Quarterly is theme-specific and captures the approaches, frameworks, processes, and tools employed in transitioning away from institutional care for children. The write-ups bring out the importance of an early gatekeeping approach, vulnerability mapping, and case management in preventing children's separation from their families and facilitating their reunification with birth parents and extended families. The interventions highlight the need to involve stakeholders, including Community-based Child Protection Groups, Panchayat and Municipal Bodies, and Railway Officials among others, in promoting noninstitutional care for children. The case studies and stories of the CCI transformation provide the evidence base for achieving the transition from institutional care to family-based care for children at risk. You can read the resource section to learn about the evolution of alternative care in the country in the last decade. We would like to thank everyone who helped us put together this edition of the IACN Quarterly. If you wish to share resources for the IACN website or quarterly or wish to discuss any issues of mutual concern, please reach out to us at iacnsecretariat@iacn.in.

We look forward to your continued support.

Sincerely,
IACN Secretariat

Updates from the Field

Learnings and experience shared by our fellow members

Need for Strengthening Kinship Care through System Support | Ms. Deeksha Mishra and Ms. Geetarani Lourembam with review and inputs from Ms. Priti Patkar, Kashina Kareem and Shatakshi Saxena

Child's Participation and Children's Group | Raja, Care Leaver and Community Mobiliser, Udayan Care

The Relevance of Community Meetings in Family Strengthening Process: A Case Study from Delhi, India | Ms. Alveera, Case Manager, Udayan Care

Transitioning Out-Of-Home Care Challenges of Care Leavers and Interventions by Rainbow Homes Program in Transition Preparedness | Ms. Dolon Bhattacharyya

Promoting Mental Health amongst school children in collaboration with Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights | Ms. Shristi Dogra, Counsellor, Udayan Care

The Champion's Journey of Kottar Social Service Society | Ms. S Sheeba, Kottar Social Service Society (KSSS) Edited by Ms. Sanjana Rajan and Ms. Nivedita Guhathakurta, Catholic Relief Services

The Evolution of the Global Care Leavers' Community (GCLC): Providing Safe Space for Transnational Exchange and Peer Support. | Ms. Surja, Care Leavers Engagement Officer, Udayan Care and Core Group Member of GCLC

Effectiveness of Thrive Scale Methodology in Family Strengthening | Mr. Pritam Prasun, Director – MEL, Miracle Foundation India

Reflection of 5th Bicon by youth with care experience | Mr. A. Albert Justin

Events and Announcements

Catch up on the latest updates on webinars, trainings and conferences from our network



Leadership Dialogues



NACG Jharkhand Meet: Miracle Foundation India

Knowledge Resources

Mission Vatsalya

Savdhanta Sanrakshnam

Implementation Guidelines



Ministry of Women and Child Development
Government of India

<https://shorturl.at/iptJM>

Transitioning Children from
Institutional Care towards
Family-Based Care

<https://shorturl.at/cHNU2>

Resources

Some key additions to our fast growing resource data base

Mission Vatsalya

In context of a family for every child

Kusum Mohapatra
CEO & Regional Director
Miracle Foundation India

India is home to 472 million children under 18, representing 39% of the country's population. Taking this in view, the government recognises the pivotal role of children's development in the nation's well-being. To ensure that various schemes and programmes are effectively implemented, the Cabinet has passed three significant umbrella schemes: Mission Poshan 2.0, Mission Shakti, and Mission Vatsalya.



Mission Vatsalya, a centrally sponsored scheme, allocates 60% of costs to the Centre and 40% to the States. However, there is a notable caveat for the eight states in the North-East along with Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, where the imposing ratio is 90:10.

Mission Vatsalya aims to create an advantageous setting for children's safety and security in accordance with the SDGs and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Notably, it incorporates the Child Protection Services Scheme (2017) and prioritizes family-based care for vulnerable children, with institutional care serving as a last alternative. This change recognizes that

familial upbringing promotes better development than institutional environments.

Families construct a secure, stable environment for children to explore and develop. Emotional relationships, self-worth, routine, and structure are all essential constituents of family life. In India, institutionalization is common in times of crisis, such as the passing away of a significant earner. Mission Vatsalya addresses this by assisting families in strengthening their families, linking them to social safety nets, and providing guardians with direct financial help of Rs. 4000/- per month per child.

Resource mapping, vulnerability mapping, and intervention implementation are critical tasks by government entities such as Panchayats and Municipal Local Bodies. Beyond institutionalization, Mission Vatsalya aids children who leave childcare institutions at 18. It emphasizes education, training for employability skills, apprenticeships, business financing help, and reintegration into society at large.

According to the World Bank, 21% of all children globally reside in India as of 2021. With a population of more than 1.4 billion, Mission Vatsalya aims to improve the health of more than 20% of the world's child population. Its all-encompassing strategy includes nourishment, education, healthcare, and defence against exploitation, abuse, and neglect.

Cooperation and Collaboration are essential to Mission Vatsalya's success, particularly regarding the involvement of NGOs and civil society. The programme aims to guarantee that every Indian child develops to their full potential and has a healthy, balanced life. Mission Vatsalya can profoundly impact the country's future and bring about transformative changes by attending to the different needs of millions of children.

For more details, please refer to the link:

[Mission Vatsalya in context of a family for every child \(indiatimes.com\)](https://www.indiatimes.com)

Transitioning Children from Institutional Care towards Family-Based Care

Richa Tyagi- Director - Strategy & Technical Expertise
Miracle Foundation India

Shveta Gupta -Assistant Manager- Program Design &
Thought Leadership Miracle Foundation India

Pritam Prasun - Director – MEL- Miracle Foundation India

In recent years, the need to transition children from institutional care to family-based care has seen quite a thrust. Various Indian and international legislations and guidelines have been advocating the move away from institutional care for children. More recently, Mission Vatsalya has dwelled on promoting, preparing, and implementing non-institutional care/family-based alternative care. Reasons for family separation (leading to institutionalisation) are wide and so the deinstitutionalisation of children residing in Child Care Institutions requires a systematic case management process to support children and families for a safe and sustainable reintegration.

In this article, Miracle Foundation India has analysed and talked about using a systematic case management process, the use of the Thrive Scale™ tool and the Thrive Methodology for assessing family well-being. The study findings reveal a notable proportion of reintegrated children who reunited with their birth families. Factors such as economic hardship and single parenthood emerged as key contributors leading to the

institutionalization of these children. The case studies mentioned in the study illustrate the reintegration process, emphasizing key steps such as intake, assessment, planning, implementation, follow-up, and closure. The study highlights the positive impact of the case management process and Thrive Scale™ in achieving safe and sustainable family-based care.

This is the summary of the paper published in the 4th edition of Children First Journal: A bi-annual and peer-reviewed journal by the Delhi Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR). The Journal has been launched with the aim of deepening and broadening the discourse on child rights by providing a platform to all persons who are engaged with the rights of children in varied capacities to share their learnings, views and experiences in this context.

For the full article, please refer to the link
[children first journal fourth issue dcpcr-31-40 .pdf \(miraclefoundationindia.in\)](#)

About The Authors

Richa - In her present role as Director of Strategy & Technical Expertise, Richa heads the Strategy & Technical Expertise vertical and leads the strategy forte at Miracle Foundation India. She is responsible for steering the strategic evolution, focus, planning, and initiatives of the organisation both for new programs as well as ongoing programs.

Shveta - In her present role as Assistant Manager under Strategy & Technical Expertise vertical, Shveta is a technical support for the various ongoing programs in Miracle Foundation India. She is responsible for providing end-to-end support in setting up strategic programs, technical services partnerships, internal knowledge management, and supporting research, articles, and publications at the organisational level

Pritam - In his present role as Director – MEL in Miracle Foundation India, Pritam leads the research, monitoring and evaluation domain and strengthens the M&E system and processes as well as knowledge management of the organisatio

Updates from the field

Case Study:

Need for Strengthening Kinship Care through System Support

Deeksha Mishra and Geetarani Lourembam

With review and inputs from Priti Patkar, Kashina Kareem and Shatakshi Saxena

The United Nations Guidelines on Alternative Care defines kinship care as “family-based care within the child’s extended family or with close friends of the family known to the child, whether formal or informal in nature”. It also recognises informal kinship care where, without any official order by a competent administrative or judicial authority, relatives or family friends take up the responsibility of the child’s caregiving, sometimes indefinitely, at the initiative of or in the absence of the child’s parents.

Raksha’s¹ (11-year-old) case was one such case of kinship care. Unforeseen circumstances including the demise of her father and the absence of her mother due to illness had led her paternal aunt Kavita to step up as her guardian and primary caregiver.

The family came in contact with the Juvenile Justice System in 2022, when Kavita approached the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) of her district, requesting Raksha’s placement in a Children’s Home (CH); an acquaintance had advised her to approach the CWC. Her first point of contact at the CWC premises was the **Helpdesk, a gatekeeping intervention** set up by Prerana in three districts: Mumbai City, Mumbai Suburban, Thane. Through the Helpdesk, she sought more information about the CWC and the process of placing Raksha in a CH. Apart from sharing the same with Kavita, the team also supported her in presenting the case to the CWC as she was anxious about CWC procedures, considering this was her first encounter with the system.



In the context of child protection, gatekeeping is the process of referring children and families to appropriate services or care arrangements with the aim of limiting inappropriate placement of children into alternative care such as institutional care, foster care, adoption etc., if not in the best interest of the child. Its primary goal is to facilitate the prevention of unnecessary separation of children from their biological or extended families. It also ensures that the principle of necessity, suitability and appropriateness is practised while making decisions regarding children who have lost parental care or are at risk of losing such support. Gatekeeping can take place at the community level and at the Juvenile Justice System level (including the CWC and Child Care Institutions).

The Helpdesk (at the Child Welfare Committee) is a gatekeeping initiative aimed at offering essential services to children and families referred by the CWC. Operated by the Prerana team, the Helpdesk not only facilitates smooth access to the CWC but also undertakes a range of critical tasks. These include providing direct social casework assistance, guiding stakeholders unfamiliar with Juvenile Justice System processes, connecting families with relevant service-providing organisations, offering documentation support, and addressing any other assistance, needs or queries that may arise. This multifaceted approach ensures that children and families receive comprehensive support and guidance throughout their interactions with the CWC.

¹ *All names changed to maintain confidentiality

The CWC referred the case to Prerana for an in-depth assessment through an order of social investigation by the CWC, and the team planned a home visit at Kavita's residence. During the visit, Kavita shared that her brother's (Raksha's father) family had been rendered homeless and had been living on the street or at railway stations since 2009. At that time, Kavita looked after both Raksha and her younger brother Aryan but was unable to bear the responsibility of their parents. She shared that while Raksha's father was able to move into their family house later, her mother continued wandering around given her mental health illness. She was found by the police at the railway station following which the family sought support from an organisation working with women. Raksha's mother was soon diagnosed with schizophrenia and was placed in a mental health facility for better care and treatment. During the time of the visit, Kavita wasn't aware of the current whereabouts of Raksha's mother as she had been transferred to another institution without Kavita's knowledge.

When Raksha's father passed away from a sudden cardiovascular illness in mid-2017, she and Aryan were left without parental care at the ages of six and two years, respectively. Kavita added that following their father's death, she had placed the two children in "hostels" and described institutions that were not registered under the Juvenile Justice Act 2015; those were instead operating as free hostels for children. While Aryan continues to live in the same institution, Raksha was brought home by her aunt upon her insistence.

Kavita's 30-year-old son is the sole earning member in Kavita's household; he has a daily wage job with a fluctuating monthly income of approximately Rs. 10,000/-. The one-room house, which is occupied by four people including Raksha, Kavita (age 50), her husband (age 55) and her son, has a rent of about Rs. 3500 per month. It further adds up to around Rs. 5000 including the expenses for water and electricity supply. They use a common toilet and bathing space which is about 200m from their house, and they do other washing and cleaning in the walkway in front of their house.

During the visit, the team observed that Kavita was keen about placing Raksha in an institution, deeming herself

incapacitated to care for her due to her own health and financial prospects. The team also noted that in this case, if the aunt refused to take care of Raksha, she would enter the category of a child in need of care and protection under section 2 (14) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 as her surviving parent (mother) was incapacitated to take care of her. This would lead to her institutionalisation.

During the interactions for the social investigation and subsequent case presentation to the CWC, the team observed a deep connection between Raksha and her aunt. Raksha refused to be placed in a children's home, wanting to stay with her family. The team oriented Kavita about the kind of support and resources she could be linked to, which would help address her concerns if she were to continue being the caregiver. At this point, the team also engaged in a discussion with Kavita to help her comprehend Raksha's reluctance to be separated from her.

As this would mark the second instance of Raksha potentially entering institutional care, the team also took the opportunity to share insights about how this situation could impact their interpersonal relationship. After understanding the impact of long-term institutional care and feeling supported by the presence of an organisation which would aid them in overcoming their challenges, Kavita reconsidered her decision to place Raksha in an institution. Looking at the available support systems and keeping Raksha's best interest and her opinion a priority, the CWC decided against institutionalisation. With the help of a mechanism such as Helpdesk which works with and supports the CWC in effectively performing its gatekeeping role, Raksha's institutionalisation was prevented.

Through a follow-up order passed for Prerana by the CWC, the team has continued to work with the family for more than a year now. During initial assessments, it was found that Kavita's financial struggles had invoked her to consider the option of institutionalisation for Raksha, although she was willing to look after her had she been financially stable. Kavita lacked support from her and Raksha's extended family and neither was she aware of or had access to any external support that may have addressed her concerns.

Given below is an overview of the family strengthening plan which got implemented in Raksha's case:

1. Linkages with social security documents such as bank account opening of the child and obtaining a bank passbook
2. Application and end-to-end follow-up to procure benefits of social welfare schemes, such as Bal Sangopan Yojana
3. Direct financial aid to the child and family for Raksha's education, scholastic needs, overall well-being etc.
4. Psycho-social support to the child and family, consisting of one-on-one and group sessions on understanding the safety protocols of the child, caregiving skills, online safety, effective interpersonal communication skills, personal safety etc
5. Assistance in locating the whereabouts of the mother and follow-up with the mental health facility where the child's mother is placed
6. Follow-up with the younger brother of the child who is currently residing in a 'hostel'
7. Livelihood support to the family & job linkages

Linkage to the Bal Sangopan Yojana

As mentioned above, the team has continuously explored sustainable support options for the family. Social security linkages have been facilitated including applications for government benefits available for Raksha such as the Bal Sangopan Yojana.

In the state of Maharashtra, the Bal Sangopan Yojana, as outlined in the Government Resolution (GR), stipulates a comprehensive list of documents that applicants must provide to access the benefits of the scheme. These documents include the child and family's Aadhaar cards, ration cards, the child's birth certificate, evidence of school attendance, income certificates, bank account details, and domicile certificates. However, a significant challenge arises as many families in contact with the system often lack some or all of these required documents. In response, the Prerana team diligently collaborates with these families to assist in gathering and organising the

necessary paperwork and facilitating the application process. This entails dedicated time and persistent follow-up through visits and communication with various stakeholders.

Subsequently, the application undergoes a thorough verification process, involving home visits by representatives from the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), followed by approval from the respective Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) in the districts. Prerana's extensive experience in supporting families to access this scheme has revealed that the process is far from straightforward. In response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the scheme's funding was initially increased to Rs. 1100/- per child and has recently been further raised to Rs. 2,200/- per child through a recent update in the GR.

Exploring Livelihood Assistance for The Family

The team also explored the provision of livelihood support for Kavita and her husband. However, it has not yet led to a positive result as the options remain limited due to their personal limitations such as health, mobility etc., of the two. The team oriented Kavita about the various kinds of livelihood options available and about organisations that provide training, self-help groups and other assistance with the same. She was also oriented to the financial

grants that could be available for her if she wished to act upon any business idea she may have. They also discussed some ideas collectively. The team also contacted placement agencies for security guards and other miscellaneous jobs for Kavita's husband. However, none of these ideas could materialise due to skill-related and physical limitations highlighted by them. Kavita's 30-year-old son still remains the sole earning member in the family.

Direct Financial Assistance

Direct temporary financial assistance has been provided to the family under the financial sponsorship element of the project to address emerging and necessary needs of the family, especially that of Raksha's. This assistance is provided specifically till the time the welfare scheme is approved and availed by the child and family. Through learnings from this case, the team's understanding of the needs of a child who is in kinship care, and the needs of the family looking after the child, also evolved. It led to the inception of a new type of financial support - a child well-being fund. A child well-being fund is a monthly allowance given to the primary caregiver for the child to cover the

Providing Psycho-social Support:

Psycho-social support for the family was another area of focus where the team has been working with Kavita and Raksha. It aims to build an understanding of ensuring the safety of the child, effective interpersonal communication between the two, and the importance of working together to develop a structure that could contribute to Raksha's day-to-day well-being. Kavita has been an active participant in these conversations with Raksha which has aided her understanding and the coordination within the family. The team is also developing a plan for working with Raksha's mother, who, with the help of the Prerana team, was recently traced in a shelter home for the aged; the family had been unaware of her whereabouts for over two years. The mother continues to exhibit symptoms of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. The team has been able to facilitate a visit between the mother, Kavita and the child. Resources for aiding her rehabilitation and eventual reintegration with her family are also being explored. The team has also been working with Kavita to refine her parenting skills in caring for Raksha.

child's basic amenities, scholastic needs etc. This support is given till the time the family gets successfully linked to Bal Sangopan Yojana. Through case-related objective deliberations within the project team and the internal sponsorship approval committee, certain criteria and the nature of this fund were decided. This amount was provided to Kavita to aid them in addressing Raksha's personal needs that they were unable to take care of, till the time the amount from the Bal Sangopan Yojana comes through. Monitoring the utilisation of such funds is an integral part of the follow-up visits which are conducted a minimum of once a month.

While working on this case, citing a dependency of the family on financial assistance, it is being deliberated that a more sustainable support mechanism needs to be set up to strengthen it. While the team will explore working with the family on livelihood aspects and will continue to provide psycho-social support to the family and Raksha, a need for a state-established support mechanism for such kinship care arrangements has been recognised. Families like Kavita's, who take up the responsibility of caregiving for children in the family left without the care of their parents, require access to such systems of support more efficiently so that separation of the child from the family environment can be avoided. For kinship care arrangements to work effectively, the system of providing support to kin as highlighted in this case and in the UN Guidelines need to be translated into practice to strengthen this alternative care practice on a larger scale.

Child's Participation and Children's Group

Raja - Care Leaver and Community Mobiliser - Udayan Care

Numerous studies highlight the lack of acknowledgement of children's voices and their limited right to actively participate or freely express their opinions. Evaluating the quality of children's lives necessitates incorporating their perspectives. Historically, there has been a shortage of mechanisms involving children in the process of documenting their concerns, often resulting in the neglect or superficial addressing of their voices. The articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child outline a spectrum of rights for children, encompassing provisions, protections, and opportunities for participation and underscores the significance of children's participation in needs assessment, as outlined in Article 12. Similarly, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, affirms that every child has the right to be heard and participate in processes and decisions that affect their interests. The Act emphasises considering the child's views, taking into account their age and maturity. Social workers placed in community-led projects have a big role in shaping the quality of life children lead and the extent to which their needs can be met.



Children's participation is truly effective only when they can trust others around them, especially their community workers/social workers and when children feel there is openness and opportunities for the free expression of opinions. Additionally, autonomy is granted to children, allowing them to make decisions that recognize their competence. Shier (2001) 'introduced a hierarchical model with five levels to promote children's rights to participation, which include:

¹ Shier, H. (2001). Pathways to participation: Opening, opportunities and obligations. *Children & Society*, 15, 107 - 117.

-
1. Listening to children;
 2. Supporting children to express their views;
 3. Taking children's views into account;
 4. Involving children in decision-making processes; and
 5. Sharing power with children.

Genuine participation in the learning process occurs when children and adults are mutually engaged. Learning happens through direct engagement with children, direct observation, or collaborative efforts with the community as a whole.

Child Participation at the Community Level

Taking these constructs at the community level, the FiT Families Together project², being implemented as a community-led family strengthening project by Udayan Care in Delhi, holds children's participation and their involvement in their decision-making process of paramount significance.

Ideation and Formation of the Children's Group

Children are equal citizens of a country and must be seen as equal partners and contributors to any society. Their agency must be built so that they become the most important members of their communities. In its second year of implementation, the project has successfully facilitated the process of a formal group of children from different communities coming together as a children's group and finding their own platform to discuss and share their stories, challenges, and their suggested solutions. The formation of this group required a thorough process to ensure that it integrates children of different ages and communities effectively. The formation process involved mobilising the communities, rapport building with the community members, and multiple interaction sessions. This group started with 7-10 members and now the group includes 50-60 children inclusive of gender and age. The group conducts two meetings every month along with other events such as awareness sessions, and important day celebrations

Objectives of the Children's Group

It has been observed that in these communities, children are forced to live in places where their safety and security are compromised. Many of them witness domestic violence and abuse, and they also witness several adults in the community engaging in harmful behaviours such as alcoholism, begging, theft, and fighting. These behaviours create an unsafe environment for children and are contrary to the idea of a child-friendly space. Therefore, one of the main objectives of the children's group has been to create a safe and child-friendly space where children could focus on positive activities and avoid negative influences. The project team has focused on fostering the development of every child in the group by providing them with opportunities to develop social skills, promoting inclusivity, and training them to be agents of change. The group also aims to raise awareness amongst children about their rights and entitlements under various children's schemes.

Children Group Meetings and Group Newsletter

The FiT team conducted a children's group meeting with 19 participants from the community with the objective of introducing the children to the concept of a newsletter and its significance. The team encouraged children to develop their own newsletter and contribute content for it which could range from educational topics to stories about their homes, community life, artwork, and the challenges they encounter. This platform was intended to shed light on these challenges and bring them to the

² *The project approach is to empower the communities and orient them to be equally concerned about the holistic development of their children. Being an urban slum area of Delhi with high population density, people living in these areas often have to compromise on basic needs and manage things with limited resources. Some of the major issues faced by the people living in these areas are lack of space for living, absence of safety and security, high rate of illiteracy, lack of awareness about available schemes and incomplete or no documentation. As part of the project intervention, the FiT team is actively involved with the community members in assisting them to identify their challenges and empowering them in resolving the identified challenges in a collective way, keeping children's interest at the centre.

attention of service providers, ultimately seeking solutions to address them. The children were granted a few days to contemplate and write the stories they wanted to share through the newsletter. For those who couldn't write, they were encouraged to express their thoughts through art and illustrations. This ensured that all children had a means to participate actively in the project. Additionally, the children were asked to brainstorm and propose a suitable name for their newsletter. By involving them in this decision-making process, the FiT team empowered the children and made them feel a sense of ownership over the project. The meeting also served as an opportunity to inform the children about the schedule of the next children's group meeting. The children's group held their second meeting with the enthusiastic participation of 15 children with two-fold agenda, including finalising a name for their newsletter and collecting the content that the children had prepared beforehand. The children's initial contributions were warmly received, and they were acknowledged for their commendable efforts. During the meeting, the children proposed various intriguing names for the newsletter, and through a democratic process, the name "BALCHARCHA" was officially chosen for the children's group newsletter. In the next children's group meeting, the team announced the leader names who had been selected after completing the given tasks and matching the criteria such as writing content, attendance, responsibility, and active participation. Six children group leaders have been chosen from three different communities based on their performance in the group. And among these leaders, two leaders are going to be elected as president and vice president for three months.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Child Leaders :

Referring to the Child Rights 'Participation Term', the team has assigned a few roles and responsibilities to the selected leaders so they themselves can make important decisions to ensure the best interest of children. Given roles and responsibilities are as follows: All the leaders are going to represent the children's group in the aspect of working on newsletter content and assisting in the events and activities for the children's group, transmitting the important information to all the other children groups in their respective communities, lead children's Whatsapp group to share important messages and learning, plan and assist with all the activities and events with the FiT team, and be active and responsible for all the children in the group. The Children's group overall gave an opportunity to all children to participate, raise their concerns, find solutions, build confidence and ultimately empower them.

Outcomes

Children's group formation has led to a range of positive outcomes including the development of children's social and emotional skills, increased self-confidence, improved problem-solving and decision-making skills, communication skills through expression of their opinions and challenges, and the opportunity to learn about leadership and teamwork. Being part of a group gave children a sense of belonging and acceptance, helping them boost their self-confidence and providing a platform for collaborative problem-solving and decision-making in a supportive learning environment.

The Relevance of Community

Meetings in Family Strengthening Process:

A Case Study from Delhi, India

Ms. Alveera - Case Manager - Udayan Care

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about!"

The above statement by Margaret J. Wheatley, an American Writer and Management Consultant, echoes the true essence of the power that lies in harnessing the true potential of a community. The FiT Families Together Project, a family strengthening model in Delhi, being implemented by Udayan Care, with support from Martin James Foundation and CERl, has been operational since 2021. The initiative focuses on holistic family and community strengthening across 10 domains of an indigenously developed framework of the "Circle of Care and Protection" (CoCP) to reduce unnecessary prevention of children from their families and effective reintegration of those restored to their families from institutional care. One of the domains of the CoCP is "Community and Social Connection".

Through the various regular community meetings, the project has attempted to establish a mechanism of engagement, with a focus on making the community own the responsibility of its children and youth and work towards meeting their rights and entitlements such as to make them grow into their full potential. Community meetings have thus become an open space for people to express their concerns, solutions and ideas on how to keep children and youth away from institutions. This serves as a vital platform for exchange, involvement, and decision-making, empowering local groups to influence plans and bring about tangible changes. One such change visibly made in the recent years has been the acknowledgement that children grow best when they are with their families and communities and sending their children away from them to institutions or aka 'hostels' is not good in the long run. These community meetings, held twice a month, aim to create a sustainable model for safeguarding families and preventing child separations in South and Southeast districts of Delhi, where the FiT Families Together project is currently being implemented. Recognising the community's pivotal role in child development and rights, as stated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), these meetings serve various crucial purposes emphasising on the importance of early identification and response to concerns by the primary environment—family and the wider community. They act as platforms for exchanging information and resources, discussing government support programs, addressing health concerns like anaemia during pregnancy, and collectively solving problems, such as providing academic support to children in need. Moreover, these meetings inform attendees about available resources, encourage capacity building through training sessions on crucial topics like parenting, health, and human rights, and foster inclusivity and understanding within the community. Community meetings offer advantages that extend beyond benefiting a limited number of individuals by positively impacting the entire community.

These community meetings have played a significant role in several ways, which are illustrated below

Communication and Information Sharing:

These meetings facilitate communication among families and community members, sharing vital information about available programs, schemes and resources. For instance, in one of the informative sessions, the community members highlighted the available support through Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) programs for pregnant and breastfeeding women. The participants raised concerns about anaemia and probable diets during pregnancy which was addressed in the meetings where the facilitators recommended incorporating iron-rich foods such as spinach and Iron Folic Acid (IFA) tablets into their diets and suggested visiting nearby government clinics where the treatment is free.

Problem-solving and Decision-Making:

The meetings provided people a chance to express their worries and decide how best to meet the requirements of the community as a whole. In one such meeting, for example, participants expressed concerns over their children's need for academic support because they were unable to pay the tuition. The participants and the project team came together and assigned volunteers in the community to assist the children with the academic subjects they were struggling with. One of the community members offered her a rooftop as the space where such activities could be carried out. Later a demand was raised to the local counsellor to provide space at the community centre run by the government to use it for children's engagement activities.

Resource Mobilization:

During one of the community meetings, people expressed concerns about the lack of resources and solutions to various issues. They were then informed about a variety of resources and options that could be of great assistance. These included women's and girls' vocational skill centres, government-run DOT centres for tuberculosis patients, easily accessible healthcare services, MLA office, SPYM-run temporary shelters for the homeless, free education tuition centres, youth-focused job-oriented skill courses, local NGOs focused on community welfare, detox centres, and crucial hotline. These get-togethers provide a forum for identifying resources that are accessible, both locally and outside the community.

Capacity Building and Education:

These sessions incorporate training and discussions on various topics, including Positive Parenting skills, health education, Human Rights, and the prevention of child marriage, contributing significantly to individual and community development.

Safety Awareness sessions:

Given the practical challenges, where families of 6 to 10 members are forced to stay in a one-room space, children often are at risk of abuse. General community awareness sessions on the implications of POCSO and remedies to keep oneself safe helped parents and children to be aware of their rights and know the remedies they can avail in case needed.

In essence, these community meetings not only foster communication and problem-solving but also aid in resource discovery, capacity building, and education by creating an inclusive environment, promoting social connections and strengthening our families and community.



TRANSITIONING OUT-OF-HOME CARE Challenges of Care Leavers and Interventions by Rainbow Homes Program in Transition Preparedness

Ms. Dolon Bhattacharyya
Manager-Research & Development
Rainbow Homes Program, India

Background

Transitioning from institutional care to independent living is challenging for care leavers, given that they do not have a family to support them (Keshri, A. K., 2021). The Rainbow Homes Program (RHP) offers a comprehensive aftercare initiative called the 'Futures Program,' specifically designed to assist young adults

Transition preparation within RHP's "Futures Program" commences when YAs turn 16 years old. It encompasses a range of vital elements, including the enhancement of life skills, the development and periodic revision of personalised life plans, assistance in obtaining essential legal identity documents and entitlements, guidance in managing daily living

An integral aspect of the program involves carefully orchestrating living arrangements for young adults (YAs), acknowledging their lack of a safety net typically provided by family or parents. The options available to YAs range from residing in Social Welfare hostels,

Regardless of their chosen living arrangements, YAs receive continuous and structured support from RHP's care staff through regular visits to their residences or sustained communication facilitated through various channels. These interactions involve discussions about

(YAs) transitioning from RHP's care homes until they reach the age of 23. This program is tailored to support YAs in completing their education and securing stable employment that aligns with their individual interests and abilities

responsibilities, provision of education and job readiness training, facilitation of job placement, financial support during the crucial initial six months post-transition, mentorship, emotional support, and capacity-building sessions to foster harmonious living across various living arrangements

residential facilities within long-term vocational institutions, and working women hostels to choosing to pay guest accommodations or establishing independent group living arrangements in rented houses or apartments.

essential needs, feedback mechanisms, and the resolution of any concerns or grievances stemming from independent living outside RHP's care homes. Such intense follow-up gives confidence to the YAs that they have a platform to bring their issues and concerns as well as to receive guidance and support.

This paper is derived from a research study conducted by RHP in 2021, encompassing 70 care leavers between the ages of 18 and 23 from RHP care homes across four cities. The study delved into the challenges and experiences faced by young adults (YAs) as they transitioned to independent living in various shared arrangements, such as group living, social welfare hostels, private hostels, paying guest accommodations, and mess facilities.

By drawing upon the perspectives and insights shared by these YAs, this paper offers a glimpse into the experiences of care leavers as they navigate independent living outside of care setups. Specifically, it focuses on their housing experiences and the adjustments necessary for transitioning to independent living beyond care settings. Additionally, the paper sheds light on RHP's methods and strategies in facilitating transition readiness and supporting YAs as they navigate the challenges of independent living outside the care system.

Choices of Different Living Arrangements:

Many YAs across different cities, while pursuing both education and employment opportunities, predominantly opted for Group Living setups in privately rented buildings. These choices were driven by the advantages they offer: cost-effectiveness, increased flexibility, and a heightened sense of autonomy in daily life. Additionally, these arrangements provided invaluable opportunities for acquiring essential life skills, ranging from money management to cooking, cleaning, budgeting, and grocery shopping.



However, some YAs preferred hostel living for specific reasons. They appreciated the superior quality of food available, as well as the relief from cooking and cleaning responsibilities, managed efficiently by the hostel administration. Furthermore, they found the hostel environment conducive to focused studying, which influenced their choice of accommodation.

Challenges of RHP's Care Leavers in Independent Living:

Irrespective of the choices of living arrangements, the challenges experienced by the surveyed YAs during post-transition independent living were wide-ranging.

- YAs had difficulties in securing affordable rental group homes near their institutions or workplaces as most of the house owners were not willing to rent out to the YAs, particularly to the girls, because of their background or apprehending consequences such as chances of the girls bringing boyfriends or escaping without paying rents, etc.
- During the initial period post-transition, YAs struggled in daily living such as buying groceries and other essentials, cooking and maintaining a kitchen, budgeting and managing finances and supplies, managing time between studying and other tasks, handling emergencies and illnesses of themselves and inmates in their living spaces, etc.
- YAs transitioning from care setups often face emotional challenges as they adapt to new environments. In the world outside care setups, they struggled to stay harmoniously in different living arrangements and maintain relationships with their peers or inmates with diverse perspectives and sometimes their romantic relationships.
- Adjustment issues not only occurred in different living arrangements but also at YAs' workplaces. They lacked motivation to continue their jobs and many of them made impulsive decisions to leave jobs for various reasons such as being unable to manage stress, working long hours, delivering tasks or feelings of being undervalued at the workplace.
- YAs faced challenges in their family setups because of various reasons. For example, YAs placed in certain career options got obstructions from their own families owing to factors like odd working hours, extensive travel etc.
- Mobilising resources for advanced vocational courses or availing expensive professional courses of their aspirations was difficult for a few YAs as well as the organisation.

However, focused follow-ups with YAs and interventions to mitigate these challenges with appropriate measures were continued by the organisation that helped them cope with their difficulties in independent living.

Major Interventions by RHP towards Transition Preparedness

A few interventions offered by RHP to smoothen the transition of YAs from care homes are as under:

- **Practising Daily Living Skills While Residing in RHP's Care Homes:** Simulated experiences, like practising grocery shopping, negotiating with vendors etc. before transitioning from care, proved invaluable for YAs as they navigated group living post-transition. Activities such as budgeting mock expenses, limited to Rs.100 per day, and creating weekly meal plans during their time in care facilities, equipped YAs with improved financial management skills for independent living.
- **Simulated Group Living Scenarios:** RHP organised 15-day 'Transition Summer Camps' that brought together girls from various age groups and different Rainbow Homes into a single residential setup. This initiative allowed them to learn essential household responsibilities, managing and grooming younger children. These experiences taught them conflict resolution skills, enabling them to handle conflicts independently without direct intervention from care staff.
- **Enhancing Employability:** Providing training that emphasizes role concentration, task delivery, accountability, and stress management in the workplace, and equipping them with the skills to navigate job interviews—beyond RHP's ongoing efforts to enhance their communication skills in care homes—significantly aids YAs in job retention.
- **Practical Guide to Group Living:** RHP has devised a manual detailing the practical aspects of shared responsibilities within Group Living arrangements. Capacity-building sessions impart techniques for harmonious coexistence, offering practical examples that help YAs effectively manage conflicts among residents with diverse mindsets in various living environments.
- **Cultivating Youth Leadership:** Initiatives targeting youth aged 16 to 23, including National UDAAN Workshops, the formation of Youth Support Committees, "Yuva Shakti" groups, City and national-level Rainbow Youth Federation, among others, foster youth leadership. These programs encourage youth participation, provide care leavers with a platform to express their concerns and grievances ensuring a smooth transition to independent living for YAs leaving RHP's care homes.
- **Stakeholder Engagement Platforms:** Parents' or Guardians' forums are established to enhance their capacity to support youth and guide them along their individualised youth plans.
- **Financial Aid for Enhancing Self-reliance:** RHP provides Savitribai Phule Unnati Scholarship to YAs, offering a one-time amount of Rs. 30,000/-, covering expenses such as education and training fees, independent living costs including rent, digital equipment, and household essentials.

Recommended Strategies to Smoothen Independent Living

- YAs engaged in vocational or academic courses can benefit from hostel placements as these not only offer cost-effectiveness but also create an environment conducive to focused studies, alleviating household responsibilities. Conversely, YAs who choose group living can be provided with guided accommodation support for at least six months' post-transition. The mentor guiding and hand-holding YAs to mitigate their difficulties without controlling their independence in this accommodation would

slowly make YAs understand their responsibilities.

- Life skill training helps YAs develop their independent living skills and attitudes of taking responsibility. Children in care homes could be gradually introduced to household responsibilities based on their age and



consent. RHP's model of "Transition Camps" can serve as a blueprint, fostering the development of vital adjustment skills while living among individuals with diverse perspectives.

- Enhancing employability skills and sustaining YAs' motivation to retain their jobs remains a critical focus. Providing sessions on resilience building, stress management, assistance with resume preparation, and conducting mock interviews significantly contribute to YAs excelling in job interviews and maintaining employment.

- Hands-on experiences in household economies as well as having a monitoring system to assess the financial status of the YAs living outside to guide budgeting, saving techniques, investment options, etc., would help them understand financial responsibilities.

- Upon reaching eighteen, reintegration into families is to be prioritised with proper family strengthening and enhancing the livelihoods of YAs' families by offering skill-based training and more comprehensive support to improve their overall well-being.
- One of the important post-care supports would be keeping a regular contract with a part-time counsellor to provide counselling as and when required in care leavers' living arrangements, irrespective of supported or independent living.

Reference

Keshri, A.K. (2021). Life after Leaving Institutional Care: Independent Living Experience of Orphan Care Leavers of Mumbai, India; <https://doi.org/10.1111/aswp.12239>

End Note

The Rainbow Homes Program is a nationwide initiative collaborating with diverse partners to uplift the most marginalised and disadvantaged children. For detailed information, visit the Rainbow Homes Program's website. RHP offers enduring residential care to street children, aiming to enhance their living conditions and future prospects across India. The residential facilities are divided into specific categories: "Rainbow Homes" for girls and "Sneh Ghars" for boys. Each care home accommodates approximately 50 to 100 children aged 6 to 18. RHP website: <https://rainbowhome.in/>

This paper is based on a research publication titled "Different Shared Living Arrangements for Care Leavers" brought out by the Rainbow Homes Program in the year 2021.

About the Author

Dolon Bhattacharyya is an expert researcher and worked extensively on government financing of social sectors, especially child budgeting in the state of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Presently she is working as Manager-Research in the Rainbow Homes Program independently handling research projects. She holds a master's degree in Economics from the University of Calcutta.

Promoting Mental Health Amongst School Children in Collaboration with Delhi Commission for Protection Of Child Right

Ms. Shristi Dogra – Counsellor – Udayan Care

“It’s been tough since my best friend betrayed me, and I find it hard to trust people. I’m in a new school, so I spend a lot of time on my own. The counsellors gave me some tips on how to stay calm and patient during family conflicts”

“I argued with my friend, and during the argument, I started to feel upset more frequently, almost losing control. But then I managed to stop and calm down. Later, my friend apologized to me, and I felt happy and peaceful”

“There is a girl in my tuition class who is making me really anxious. I told my tuition teacher and my parents about it, and they encouraged me to have someone with me when I go home, so I don’t feel alone and scared.”

The Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR), a statutory body of the Government of Delhi on matters of child rights invited Udayan Care to deliver a series of ten sessions on mental health in Government school, East Delhi district, from 11th – 19th October 2023. Aptly titled "Recline Your Mind and Unwind Your Mind," these sessions were held with 9th and 11th-grade students, aiming to start conversations with adolescent children in schools of Delhi to deepen their understanding of mental health, dismantle stigma, and foster open conversations on this crucial subject. Led by counsellors from Udayan Care, the workshops sought to equip students with strategies for overall well-being and emotional development. With an average attendance of approximately 65 students per session, the initiative reached a total of 650 students across the ten sessions.

The Family Strengthening project of Udayan Care, FiT Families Together, has been working on prevention and reintegration aspects of families and communities in South East district of Delhi since 2021 and over time has successfully forged strong relationships with key stakeholders at the district and state level. The project experience of working with community children with a strong focus on mental health experience led to this collaboration. The workshops recognised the necessity to raise awareness among students about specific aspects of mental health, intending to amplify the influence of

The outcomes were substantial, as students notably admitted to having increased their understanding of mental health importance and the necessity for care. The workshops helped create safe spaces for students to openly share their challenges, addressing concerns ranging from family pressure to managing anger and societal opinions. Teachers

In conclusion, the success of these workshops emphasizes the importance of continued and expanded initiatives focusing on mental health in educational settings. Sustained collaboration and dedication are pivotal in ensuring that mental health remains a priority, contributing to the well-being of future generations and fostering a society that supports and prioritizes mental health from an early age. Post-pandemic, the realisation to work with the adolescent and teenage population and help them offset negative behaviour



mental health initiatives through students, ultimately reaching a broader array of families.

The workshops took a holistic approach, emphasizing the interconnectedness of mental and physical health. Through engaging discussions, students were guided through various challenges such as anxiety, depression, peer pressure, and social media influence. Importantly, students were coached on adopting coping strategies and resilience-building techniques to navigate life’s uncertainties.

also benefitted by gaining heightened awareness of mental health challenges, enabling them to offer appropriate support. Additionally, students were empowered with knowledge about their rights and available helplines, fostering an environment of empathy and support within the school community.

has become more pertinent and requires such capacity-building sessions at multiple levels. The involvement of agencies such as DCPCR in such activities with school-going children can help to reduce stress and anxiety and bring relief to the overall situation of mental well-being in the country. The next step ideally must be more sessions with their families and communities so that everyone involved is seen to have a common understanding of mental well-being.

The Champion's Journey of Kottar Social Service Society

Ms. S Sheeba - Kottar Social Service Society (KSSS)

Edited by Ms. Sanjana Rajan & Ms. Nivedita Guhathakurta - Catholic Relief Services

As part of the Changing the Way We Care (CTWWC) project of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Kottar Social Service Society (KSSS) has been working on family strengthening initiatives in 16 villages, with more than 500 families. As part of the family strengthening initiatives, KSSS promotes awareness of family care for children among various community groups such as Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Parent-teacher Associations (PTAs) and Parish councils (church-based community groups). They also undertake group counselling for parents and child protection sessions on various topics such as substance abuse, institutional and

non-institutional care and alternative care for children. Apart from this, KSSS has done an intensive vulnerability mapping across all 16 villages and has identified the most vulnerable families whose children are at high risk of institutionalisation. These families are continuously monitored, provided psychosocial support and linked to government and church-based schemes and services, to promote family strengthening. KSSS has designated field case managers working in every village with the identified families. However, it is not easy to do it without the support of the community.

To support the CTWWC project, especially the children and families, leaders and key influencers, called 'Champions for Family Care' were selected from these villages who advocate for change, especially change in behaviour of others. These champions serve as pillars, actively supporting the project, and ensuring vulnerable families receive the care they deserve to enable them to provide for their children. Gandhiji's quote, '*The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others*', rings true in the unwavering dedication of the champions. Their commitment to supporting vulnerable families in their villages serves as a living testament to this philosophy and they have continuously been reaching out to those who were previously unseen or unheard of within their communities.



Ms. Medona at the Annual Champions Review Meeting

KSSS had a vision - to change lives and create champions of change. It has worked with 74 champions in the past year. These champions are deeply involved in the family strengthening initiatives from the very beginning. They engage in various activities such as identifying families in need, accompanying and supporting case managers in regular follow-up home visits, assessing the immediate needs of children and families, and helping them access governmental and non-governmental schemes and services to enhance their well-being. Moreover, these champions excel in identifying local resources that can be mobilised and providing essential socio-emotional support these families need.

¹ KSSS is the social service wing of the Diocese of Kottar in the district of Kanyakumari and a partner of CRS in Tamil Nadu.

Among these remarkable champions that KSSS has identified stand out Ms. Medona and Ms. Shiny,³ both hailing from CTWWC beneficiary families themselves. Both have experienced the benefits of support received through this project, such as case management of their children, psychosocial support given to their family members, and linkages to benefactors for specific education and shelter

Ms. Medona hails from the village of Kodimunai, where her kindness seems to touch every soul and her presence reaches into every corner of the village. With the help of the CTWWC project, a group of champions dedicated to weaving a safety net for struggling families was formed. They became the agents of change, creating a network to support families in need. We now have 37 individuals who came together forming a circle of generosity called the benefactors' group. The group has an active WhatsApp group through which details of vulnerable families in need, requests for support, and possible donors and resource pathways are shared. The

support, and they now passionately extend their knowledge and support to strengthen families within their village. Having experienced its positive effects firsthand, they've become dedicated and invaluable assets to the project, tirelessly facilitating and supporting work on the ground, reaching out to families, creating awareness on the project and supporting project staff on the field.

group remains active in mobilising support as quickly as possible, and though they prioritize families in their village, they have reached out to families in and around, with compassion that knows no bounds. Together, these champions and benefactors have created a tapestry of humanity, bridging gaps with empathy and turning mere existence into lives filled with dignity and hope. More than 30 families have been supported through Ms. Medona's group in 2023, for the education of their children, through food donation drives, medical support and the construction of toilets.

Ms. Medona, the guiding force behind this benefactors' group, stands proud of the change that is now rippling through her village.

"I have always wanted to help those around me who are struggling but felt limited by lack of financial resources. When I was introduced to the CTWWC project and the concept of Champions by the project staff, I felt a surge of happiness. It gave me a way to make a difference in our village despite not having money. I've been supporting people in whatever ways I can manage, and it brings me immense satisfaction and happiness knowing that I'm making a positive impact."

Meanwhile, in the neighboring village of Pillaithoppu, Ms. Shiny was facing difficult times. Her husband's struggle with alcoholism cast a shadow over their simple mud house, where the family lived hiding their challenges from the world's eyes. Their basic needs remained unmet, and days often passed with no food to eat and going to bed hungry. Despite these hardships, their children were eagerly active in sports, excelling in district-level competitions and receiving awards. However, the family's financial constraints hindered their ability to provide for these talented youngsters, adding to their challenges in meeting the fundamental necessities of life.



Village-level meeting with Champions, Pillaithoppu

² The consent for publishing the real names have been taken from the individuals.

Ms. Shiny's struggles came to light when a caring CTWWC staff member noticed their unspoken difficulties during a visit to Pillaithoppu. Their family was included in the CTWWC beneficiary list, and slowly, this project started to bring hope into their lives. Regular visits and emotional support from the assigned field case manager, Ms. Antoniammal started to brighten their days. She worked tirelessly, to understand their needs as a family and to connect them to essential resources. She introduced Ms. Shiny to an income generation program

that breathed new life into her world. Her family was also supported in constructing a toilet through benefactors in their village, and they are also in the process of collecting donations for house construction. She now supports the project whole-heartedly and has become one of the most dedicated champions of CTWWC. In her village, she became a symbol of strength, reaching out to other vulnerable families in her village, offering comfort and unwavering support

Ms. Shiny, once facing adversity, emerged as a guiding light for others, navigating challenges with resilience. She strongly believes in passing on the kindness she has received, *"I felt like I couldn't cope, even with my children. Then CTWWC staff stepped in, offering emotional support and bringing our situation to the attention of our community. During those difficult times, their support was invaluable. CTWWC was like a guardian angel sent by destiny, guiding us through our struggles. Now, we're genuinely happy and motivated to assist other families facing similar challenges."* Through her motivation, there are now a group of 5 champions in Pillaithoppu, who will be working to support families and create a chain of champions.

In the spirit of Mother Teresa's wisdom, our champions embody the essence of making a thoughtful impact through seemingly small acts fueled by immense love. Their unwavering willingness to extend support, within and beyond the bounds of their abilities, echo her sentiment: *'Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.'* Through their efforts, the Kottar Social Service Society witnessed a remarkable transformation. The collective

support received from these champions, emerging from the vulnerable families, has sparked significant change, shaping Champion groups that embrace responsibility and compassion. In the coming years, KSSS will strive to create more champions for vulnerable families, because it is in these small acts, executed with love and dedication, that the foundation for a thriving, caring community is built.

The Evolution of the Global Care Leavers' Community (GCLC) : Providing Safe Space for Transnational Exchange and Peer Support.

Ms. Surja - Care Leavers Engagement Officer -
Udayan Care and Core Group Member of GCLC

“We want the seat at the table said one of them when the other quickly chipped, how about having the entire table itself” – conversations at Care Leavers' Cafes

Introduction

Care Leavers (CLs) are young persons, who as children, have the lived experience of growing up in formal or informal alternative care, and have left it, at the age of maturity, mostly 18 years of age in most countries. Mostly, the transition from living in care to independent living is extremely difficult. The lack of a supportive, permanent ecosystem around them during their formative years makes their transition to independent living tough and often leaves them with little confidence, low self-agency, lack of basic life skills, limited job opportunities, loss of educational opportunities, and lack of financial resources. The interrupted and fractured nature of their care often hampers their education and growth. All of this results in the CLs undergoing extreme stress and difficulties, with a lack of access to effective support services. Due to this unique myriad of factors, CLs are now recognised as the most vulnerable young people in society, and in need of extra care and consideration at individual, societal, and systematic levels, both nationally and internationally. COVID has been particularly difficult for CLs worldwide, further exacerbating their already vulnerable situations. Bringing care experienced persons to know each other and connect remotely has been found as a process that aids them in overcoming their difficulties and finding hope for themselves as well as their community. The understanding is that despite radically different cultural contexts for CLs across countries, the struggles faced by care leavers are often very common and similar. Hence, building strong connections and communities for vulnerable youth can often be very powerful and can create avenues for psychosocial support and resiliency. CLs who have the experience of being in residential care homes, often lose out on any relationship with their family members and then find difficulties settling back with them. There have been studies which show that adverse childhood experiences affect health and developmental difficulties (Webster, 2022). Networks and communities set up by CLs provide them with multiple kinds of support, serve as a family for those who might otherwise not have access to such support, along with providing them with a safety net and safe spaces to voice their concerns, share their experiences, as well as sources of information and resources to which they might not otherwise have access. Another important aspect of these networks is their collective nature, where all CLs can get an opportunity to have a collective voice and access to the right audiences to discuss relevant issues. This approach has often led to CLs' feeling empowered. In order to build and sustain such networks, and leverage the CLs' unique lived experiences and challenges as a group, their participation in research, advocacy efforts, and programmes to support them, is essential. Equally essential is that these groups receive the right guidance and support, along with technical as well as financial resources. Keeping this in view, opportunities were created to bring together a community of care leavers that transcends boundaries and other barriers.

Webinar 1: [How do I connect with the larger world? – The need for Networking](#)

Webinar 2: [My Care, My Voice](#)

Webinar 3: [Contribution of Research on Care Leaving – the Global Experience](#)

Webinar 4: [Poster presentation](#)

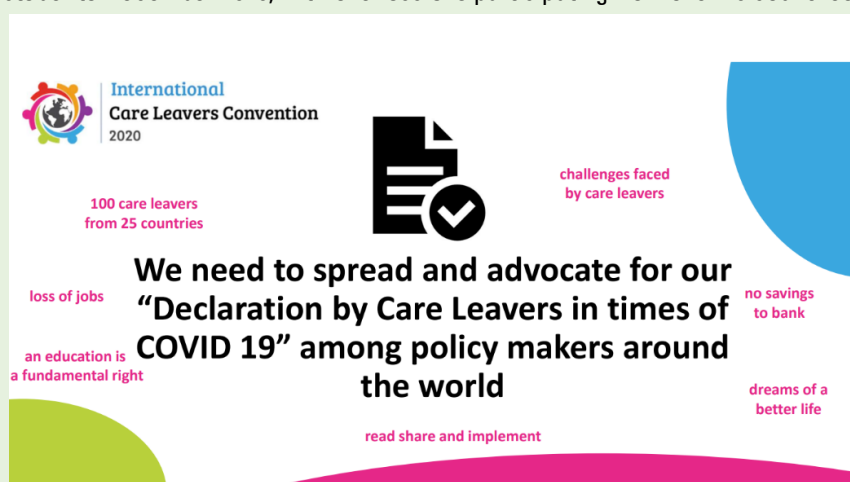
The First International Care Leavers Convention

Realising the increasing isolation during COVID 19, especially for CLs, the 'First International Convention for Care Leavers Convention' (ICLC) was conceptualised by an inter-agency collaborative partnership of eight organisations. This included four Care Leavers' Networks, namely: Care Leavers Association and Network (India), Generation Never Give Up (Sri Lanka), Latin American Network of Care Leavers, and Zimbabwe Care Leavers Network along with four civil society organisations from across the world, namely, Kinderperspectief (Netherlands), SOS Children's Villages, Udayan Care (India), and the University of Hildesheim (Germany). The ICLC was preceded by a webinar where 100 CLs came together online for two months periodically to charter their own

Declaration during COVID-19¹. This Declaration became a strong advocacy tool for CLs at their national level to advocate with their respective governments and was translated into several languages, including German and Spanish, and was endorsed by several organisations.

ICLC was preceded by a series of webinars from October to December 2020, with over 300 CLs participating from over 20 countries.

The 3-day event took place from November 23 to 25, 2020, in a virtual setting which attracted a massive crowd of 2300 delegates from more than 80 countries, each bringing their unique knowledge and background from the global care system. The convention covered a wide array of topics related to care leaving, with a closing webinar held in December 2020, where the CLs presented the key outcomes to policymakers from across 11 countries



Outcomes of the ICLC

Significant insights emerged from the ICLC 2020 and were presented by the CLs in the form of key takeaways². ICLC also saw the establishment of the Global Care Leavers' Community or GCLC and the launch of a resource website³. The biggest boost due to the establishment of the GCLC perhaps has been their incredible strength and ability to amplify the voices of

CLs in unison and make it reach the right audience, establishing that connections amongst CLs can cut across boundaries. "Meeting people with similar experiences from different countries made me feel supported and I felt a lot has to be done starting from the mentoring to overall development of care leavers in all countries", said one of the care leavers.

¹ Accessed at : [Care Leavers Declaration 2020 - Care Leavers' Community \(careleaverscommunity.org\)](https://careleaverscommunity.org/care-leavers-declaration-2020)

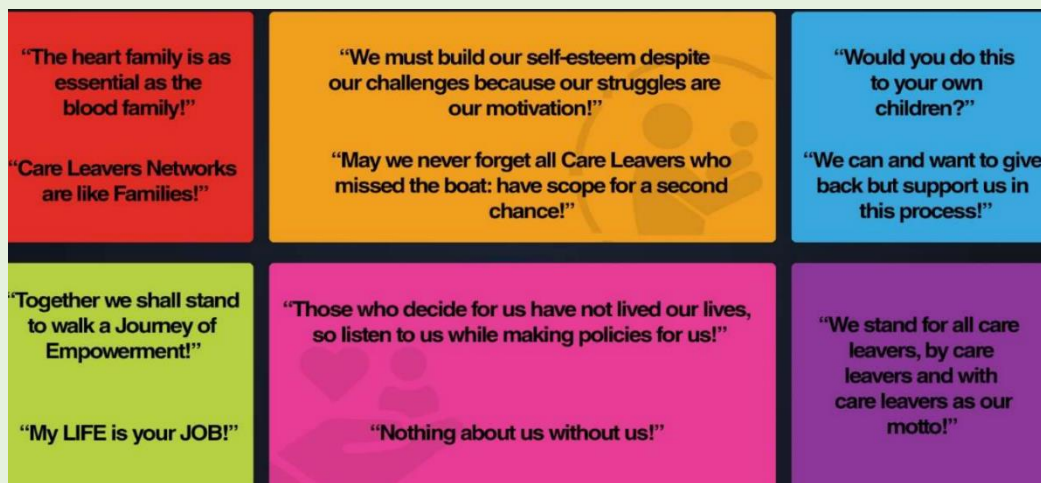
² Accessed at: [Microsoft PowerPoint - Key take aways11th \(careleaverscommunity.org\)](https://careleaverscommunity.org/key-take-aways-11th)

³ [Care Leavers' Community \(careleaverscommunity.org\)](https://careleaverscommunity.org)

ICLC also led to the development of policy briefs for practitioners⁴ and policy makers⁵ which were a culmination of the topics discussed in the aforementioned survey, webinars, as well as the Convention. The brief for policy makers expanded on the 11 gaps previously identified with a systemic policy lens, and contained recommendations for creating policies and implementing policy reforms with care leavers in mind. The primary recommendation for this goal was that all policies affecting CLs must be designed with them as equal partners at every step of the way, with the principles of collective social responsibility, and equal participatory processes in mind. Recommendations to close each of the 11 gaps were also made, after reaching a consensus amongst CLs from different countries, meant to serve as guiding points or philosophical points of reference for the authorities in charge.

Monthly Cafes

Post the ICLC, the GCLC started on a strong footing where they decided to hold a monthly online café on the last Sunday of every month, starting from January 2021. Open to any CL across the globe, these cafes accommodate scheduling and time zones globally online open spaces are open for CLs



only. The cafes are hosted by CLs from different countries, who decide the theme themselves, and the participation and hosting for this cafe is facilitated by the Secretariat of the Global Care Leaving Community. The Secretariat, currently located at Udayan Care, and supported by UNICEF India, has played a pivotal role in sustaining this effort led by the young people themselves

10 days Virtual Care Leavers Festival, 2022

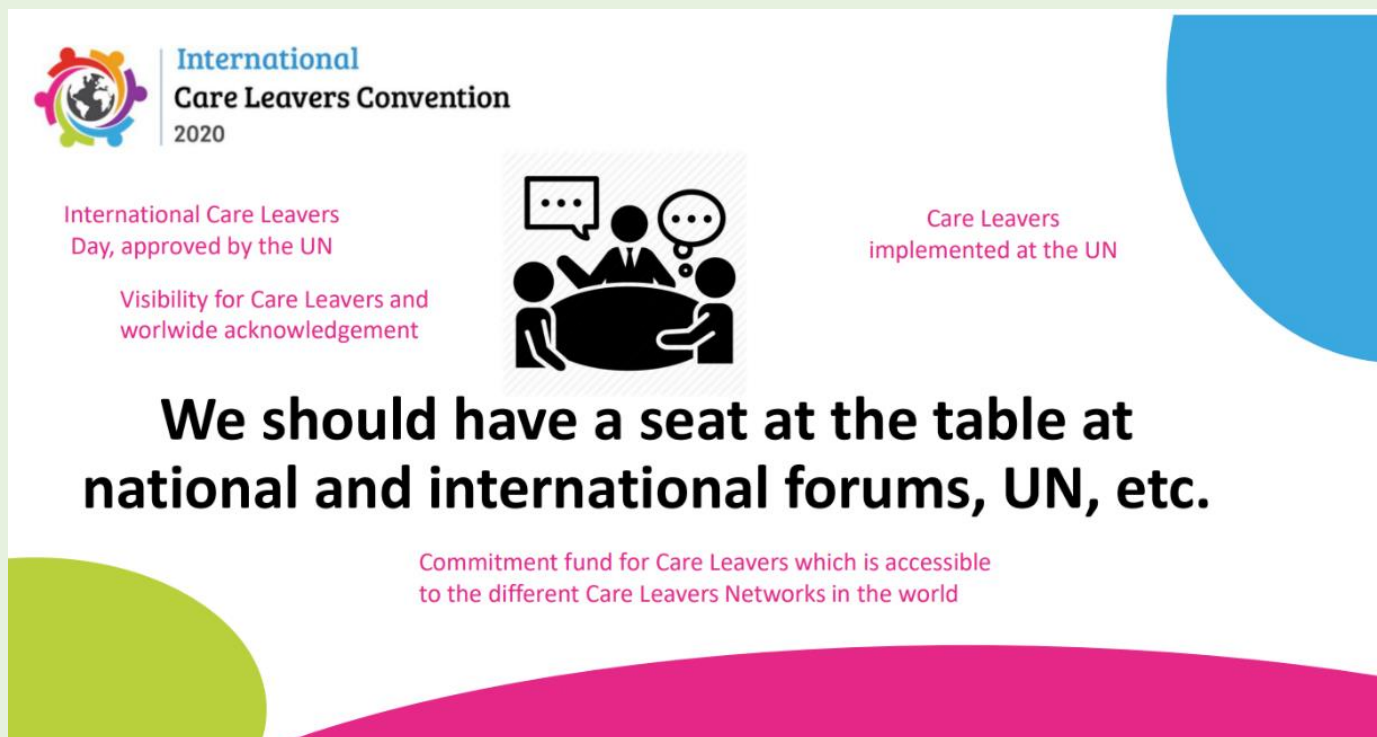
In 2022, GCLC came together strongly to host their virtual festival and took charge of the central seat at the decision-making table, right from conceptualisation to execution of a series of events and engagements, all for CLs, by CLs and with CLs. The Festival⁶ allowed CLs to express themselves in multiple ways, to connect and build understanding with care leaver networks of different countries, as well as with individual young adults from across the globe on different domains of social inclusion and independence. It also aimed to make a forum for the CLs' voices to be united and share learnings to create different avenues for including more CLs into the community and making them independent leading to the formation of a global forum where people can join from all parts of the world. The Festival was held between the 20th and 30th of November 2022 and had participants from over 30 countries. The core group of CLs involved participation from 23 CLs from 13 countries, where 10 themes were discussed. A safeguarding committee was set up to ensure that all participants felt comfortable and secure, not only during the festival itself but also during the planning phase and the post-festival phase. Further recommendations included

⁴ [convention_2020_clc_practioners_brief.pdf \(careleaverscommunity.org\)](#)

⁵ [convention_2020_clc_policy_makers_brief.pdf \(careleaverscommunity.org\)](#)

⁶ Accessed at [Care Leavers Festival 2022 - Care Leavers' Community \(careleaverscommunity.org\)](#)

the encouragement of networks of care leavers at all levels, domestic and international, as well as the recognition of an International Day of Care Leavers, to raise awareness about the issues faced by care leavers, and to bring attention and support to them.



International Care Leavers Convention 2020

International Care Leavers Day, approved by the UN

Visibility for Care Leavers and worldwide acknowledgement

Care Leavers implemented at the UN

We should have a seat at the table at national and international forums, UN, etc.

Commitment fund for Care Leavers which is accessible to the different Care Leavers Networks in the world


Way Forward

The outcomes of the 10-day Festival now serve as a guide for the GCLC.

The primary recommendation that emerged from the Convention and the Festival was the

advocacy for an internationally recognised Care Leavers' Day, as while many of the issues faced by CLs vary as per their realities and context, in essence they remain similar across the globe. With regard to policy reform, the importance of schemes and policies being in place to provide scholarships, assistance, etc., was highlighted for the way forward, the monthly online cafés were lauded as enjoyable and useful to facilitate a global sense of connectedness and will be continued. Work on a global CLs Exchange Forum is being undertaken, to provide opportunities for learning and growth to CLs from all over the world, with a particular focus on cross-cultural exchanges.

GCLC is on its way to relooking at the constitution of its core group of leaders who take charge of the community and draft its vision and 5-year action plan. GCLC has emerged as a forum for the CLs with strong leadership by the CLs and a working group that supports them as and when needed. *"Nothing for Us Without Us"* remains the uncompromised methodology for GCLC since its inception till date.



25 should be the new 18 (soft landing from planet youth care on planet earth)

Effectiveness of Thrive Scale Methodology in Family Strengthening

Mr. Pritam Prasun – Director – MEL Miracle Foundation India GCLC

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) reiterates and confirms the knowledge and research findings concerning children and child development that children’s development in a nurturing family environment is the most fundamental need and right (Article 5). As per a study by UNICEF, most children in CCIs have at least one living parent or relative who can care for them¹. In many cases, these family members could care for their children if given the right support. Besides, studies² indicate there is a common perception in society regarding children/adults from shelter backgrounds which appears to be that they are wrong-doers and are placed in shelter care for “correctional” interventions, and therefore avoided or not to be trusted. The stigma attached run all the way from school experiences through to work and adult life, and they are commonly reported to be perceived as a threat or shown pity by others. A direct and overwhelming impact of institutionalisation has thus been the stereotyping/ stigmatisation across all spheres of their lives

Miracle Foundation is a 23-year-old organisation with a vision “To ensure a family for every child in our lifetime” We work for children living in vulnerable situations and in Child Care Institutions (CCI) with a specific focus on 5 well-being domains. We work in alignment with Mission Vatsalya focusing on Family Strengthening (FS) and Family-Based Alternative Care (F-BAC). We collaborate with the state governments and build the capacities of the social workforce on alternatives to institutional care, reaching into communities to identify and strengthen vulnerable families long before the child separates.

Since 2019, Miracle Foundation India has been facilitating, with its CCI partners, the implementation of a systematic process of case management referring to JJA tools of ICP, SIR leveraging Thrive Scale™ to ensure safe, permanent, and sustainable reintegration of children as well as to prevent separation. In this process, Miracle Foundation India has facilitated family strengthening through a systematic case management process leading to the reintegration of more than 3000 children in family and Family-Based Alternative Care, with almost negligible disruptions of reintegration and children continuing to stay in a safe and nurturing family environment.

These successful cases of reintegration have been made possible with a systematic case management process focusing on family strengthening. To objectively assess the areas of concern and suitability of placement, Thrive Scale™ was developed by Miracle Foundation. The Thrive Scale™ tool which is an innovative, strength-based approach that enables the measurement of progress and risk assessment at each stage of our work. It focuses on five key domains of well-being: Physical and Mental Health, Education, Family and Social Relationships, Household Economy, and Living Conditions. Developed by the Miracle Foundation, the Thrive Scale™ was created based on extensive research of similar tools utilised by organisations worldwide. It is used to evaluate the family’s situation to identify the necessary support required for the prevention of a child’s separation from family or their reunification with family. It can be employed to assess families at risk of separation, evaluate suitability for foster care/adoption, determine readiness for independent living, or explore other family placements.

The Thrive Scale™ tool serves the following purpose –

- Assess the safety of the family and community environment in facilitating the prevention of separation from family, reintegration, and placement into F-BAC options
- Determine the specific needs of the child and family for a secure living environment
- Develop a comprehensive intervention plan to address the identified requirements
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of prevention and placement progress over time.

The tool draws special attention to critical safety concerns in the life situations of a child and family. These critical safety concerns are termed as “Red Flags” which must be addressed with utmost priority. For each question/milestone within all five well-being domains, appropriate option (from one of the four mentioned below) are assigned to indicate the level of concern. In-crisis: Requires immediate attention; Vulnerable: Requires attention, but not urgent; Safe: Attention is helpful, but not necessary; Thriving: No attention needed.

¹ <https://www.unicef.org/protection/children-in-alternative-care>

² [f4650b8ba51ef3fff80ff6d218fd7503.pdf \(bettercarenetwork.org\)](https://www.bettercarenetwork.org/f4650b8ba51ef3fff80ff6d218fd7503.pdf)

Feedback from the caseworkers within Miracle’s partnering CCI and government officials reflect that families would choose to stay together if they could, and would not place children in institutions if it did not seem absolute necessary. Here Thrive Scale tool becomes a practical tool for the case worker to assess the need, address safety concerns, and provide necessary intervention which eventually leads to family strengthening.

To measure the effectiveness of Thrive Scale™, an in-depth analysis of Thrive Scale™ Assessment data for a cohort of 147 children was carried out to understand the progress, trends, and movement of children between “In-crisis” and “Thriving”, and to understand the relationship between red flags and Thrive Scale Scores. The assessment was done between August 2020 – March 2022. The average age of children was 15 years and constituted 65% of female children. The children were mainly from Miracle’s CCI partners.

Findings reflected that the time interval between assessments remained constant which was around 60 days and overall Thrive Scale score improved with each assessment and the number of red flags was reduced. Figure 1 depicts the Thrive Scale Score from the 1st to 4th assessment and in corresponding assessments number of children with at least one red flag was identified. Some children exhibited a single red flag, while a significant number displayed multiple red flags.

Figure 1

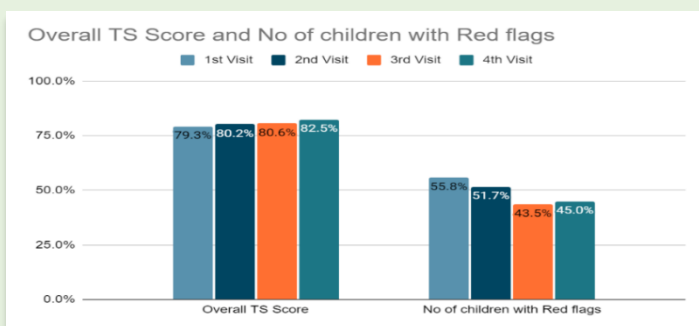
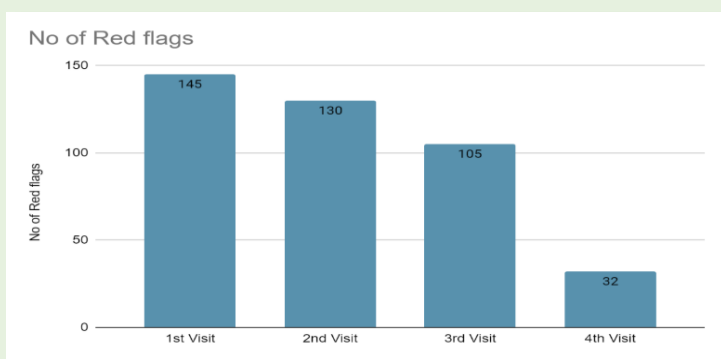


Figure 2 illustrates a decline in the absolute number of red flags from 145 in the initial assessment to 105 in the third assessment. This reduction indicates the effectiveness of prompt interventions implemented by the social workforce in addressing these concerns.

Figure 2

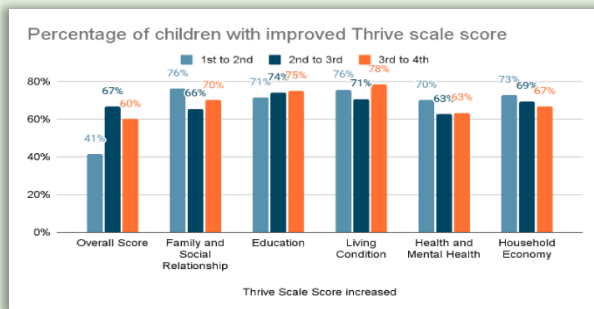


Although the number of red flags reduced over a period, findings reflect that it's not always a linear way. The situation of each child and family situation is different. Many times at a point when a case worker feels that red flags have been addressed, they see them reoccurring after some time and it takes considerable time to stabilise the situation. From the prevention lens, if the child or family is “In-crisis” for any parameter, the case worker must pay urgent attention. While most of the times addressing these concerns are in their control, the other times they may have to refer the case to the experts or connect with their supervisor for guidance. And in whatever way when that’s addressed, addressing concerns does not guarantee a transition to the “Thriving” stage. While immediate issues may be resolved, sustained attention is necessary to prevent a potential regression to an “In-crisis” situation.

As Thrive Scale™ parameters and red flags are closely related, it is also observed that overall Thrive Scale score does improve but this improvement may not be observed in every assessment. It was observed that while some children and family scores

improved quickly in other cases it took some time, and in some cases, the scores even dropped. Figure 3 reflects the percentage of children with improved Thrive Scale scores between assessments across five well-being domains. This can be seen as a positive trend, indicating that the support or interventions children received during this period were effective in maintaining or enhancing their well-being. That being said, the findings highlight the importance of prioritising cases identified as “In-crisis” situations. Urgent attention and a commitment to addressing these cases in a timely manner are essential.

Figure 3



The Thrive Scale Methodology is a crucial tool in child case management, working alongside the Social Investigation Report and Institutional Care Plan tools. The Thrive Scale™ tool empowers social workers to make informed decisions based on data and evidence. With early identification of red flags, it supports social worker to plan intervention accordingly to ensure the safety of children and family strengthening. While all the parameters of the well-being domain are important, “In-crisis” situations sometimes require referral to experts or consultation with supervisors. While addressing concern does not guarantee to the “Thriving” stage, overall Thrive Scale scores may improve, reflecting effective support and intervention for children’s well-being.

About the Author

Pritam Prasun is an evaluation and monitoring expert with around fifteen years of experience. In his present role as Director – MEL in Miracle Foundation India, he leads the research, monitoring and evaluation domain and strengthens the M&E system and processes as well as knowledge management of the organisation. He has done his Post Graduate Diploma in Health Management (PGDHM) from Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR University), Jaipur. He has extensive experience and sound background in conceptualising, designing and implementing Theory of Change (TOC), Log frame, M & E framework, Management Information System (MIS), assessment tools, formative research, Impact evaluations and data analytics. He has contributed research articles in reputed journals and as a speaker at conferences. He has worked with government, NGOs, INGOs and CSR organisations across Education, Livelihood, Reproductive and Child Health, Nutrition, Gender and Life Skill domains.

Voices from the field

A Youth Ambassador's Reflection on the BICON Conference.

Call for Contribution IACN quarterly Updates from the Field' and 'Perspectives'

Mr. A. Albert Justin - Assistant Manager -
District Program - Miracle Foundation India

"I know I can't change any care leavers past. But my initiatives will change their future.": Reflection of 5th Bicon by Care Experienced Youth.

"I am Albert Justin, a care leaver from Cornerstone Children's Home in Manaparai, Trichy, Tamil Nadu. Moving to Cornerstone Children's Home became necessary for a better future after my mother's passing. Despite the opportunity to pursue postgraduate education, I opted to start my career to support my sister.

Post-care life posed new challenges in a small room, requiring adjustments to this unfamiliar reality. To overcome this, I saved 70% of my salary and started giving evening tuition. Despite challenges, my perseverance was fueled by the goals of owning a house and financing my sister's marriage. Today, I am happily married with a four-year-old son named Jonathan.

Inspired by my journey, I aimed to work for care leavers and advocate for their rights. In 2020, I joined Miracle Foundation India as a Youth Ambassador (YA). This programme enabled me to develop leadership skills, enhance public speaking abilities, and improve proficiency in spoken English. Collaborating with fellow YAs from different regions, we led a youth-led webinar discussing common challenges faced by care leavers.

As a YA, I actively participated in the International Care Leavers Convention, engaging in discussions on the JJ Act with experts. I attended and conducted strategy meetings, emphasizing the importance of reading habits. Additionally, I

contributed to youth advocacy sessions addressing problems faced by care leavers in Child Care Institutions and society. Our survey of 70 care leavers helped identify future program needs.

An exciting opportunity arose when I participated in the **BICON 2023** international conference in Kathmandu, Nepal, on September 6-7, 2023. BICON, an inter-agency cooperation of eight leading international NGOs, focuses on alternative

care for children and has been a leading conference since 2014, advocating for the rights of children and young people without parental care."

This year, the conference united over 300 delegates worldwide, including practitioners, government representatives, academics, and young people with lived care experiences. The conference theme, *"Family-Based Alternative Care: A Beacon of Hope for Children in Asia,"* guided plenaries and panel discussions on topics such as the impact of COVID-19 on alternative care, implementing UN Guidelines, best practices in family-based alternative care, and the importance of involving children in decision-making.

This event provided me with an opportunity for informal networking and sharing experiences.

Key insights I have gained involve:

Recognizing Family-Based Alternative Care (F-BAC):

- Acknowledge F-BAC as the optimal choice
- Emphasize a comprehensive, child-centered approach
- Support through policies, regulations, and resources

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):

- Employ M&E for accountability and quality to track progress and well-being of care leavers as well as to help understand the effectiveness and efficiency of the resources invested in them



- Identify needs and challenges for tailored services. Foster a culture of learning and improvement among the stakeholders involved in the care system, such as care providers, social workers, policymakers, and funders. This can help enhance the quality and accountability of the care system, and promote the rights and participation of care leavers
- Similarly, assess impact and value of interventions

Promotion and Advocacy:

- Building alliances with stakeholders, media, and partners like other care leavers organisations, civil society organisations, researchers, policy makers etc
- Amplify the voice and impact of care leavers by engaging in various platforms for communication and dissemination. Utilising social media, websites, blogs, podcasts, events, and more



Informed Decision-Making:

- Base F-BAC on evidence, research, and the voices of care leavers
- Ensuring that decisions align with the perspectives of children and young care leavers

For me, **BICON 2023** showcased progress and potential in family-based alternative care in Asia, addressing challenges to ensure every child's right to grow up in a loving family. As a youth leader, I have learned the importance of effective communication, strong interpersonal skills, and a passion for positive community impact. Being a role model involves staying informed about social issues, embracing a willingness to learn, and working well in a team. Confidence in handling responsibilities and challenges is crucial, and ultimately, a youth leader must inspire, motivate, and foster an inclusive environment where every voice is heard and valued.

With these learnings, I step into my role as Assistant Manager, District Program, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, with Miracle Foundation India. I'm motivated to nurture happy, responsible children contributing positively to society. Committed to representing youth views, my goal is to create a societal impact and contribute to community betterment.

Action Items for me:

- Expand the care leavers' network for mutual support.
- Advocate for aftercare programs and youth involvement in policy-making.
- Establish a reading culture among care leavers which is crucial for their personal, social, and academic development. To achieve this, we need to assess their current reading habits, identifying unique needs and preferences to create a tailored and supportive environment.
- Foster an inclusive environment for care-experienced individuals in society.

"My vision is to create happy and responsible children who can thrive in society and improve the lifestyle of care leavers. As a youth ambassador, I am committed to representing the views and interests of young people in various forums and events. This is an exciting opportunity to make a positive impact on society and contribute to the betterment of our communities."

About the Author

A. Albert Justin is a B.Ed (Mathematics Education) from Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University. He joined a private school as an English & Math teacher & has nine years of experience. Albert has been associated with Miracle Foundation India in 2020 as one of the Youth Ambassadors and has recently joined Miracle Foundation India as Assistant Manager, District Programme.

Events and Announcements

Leadership Dialogue: A Family for Every Child

Upasana Upadhaya – Assistant Manager –
Program Communication – Miracle Foundation India

Miracle Foundation India, through its Leadership Dialogue initiative, has emerged as a driving force in shaping the discourse on Family Strengthening (FS) and Family-Based Alternative Care (F-BAC) in India. This inclusive platform brings together government bodies, civil society, experts, and youth with lived experiences to encourage collaboration, knowledge exchange, and recognition. The focus is on fostering positive change for vulnerable children and families, going beyond conventional training platforms to create a collective narrative that transforms child protection and family well-being.



The recent Inaugural Virtual Dialogue is centered on exemplary Gatekeeping practices at the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) level. Esteemed panelists, including government and state officials from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Odisha, alongside a dedicated youth ambassador engaged in a comprehensive discussion with 158 participants from various regions and organisations. The key themes included strengthening family bonds, improving gatekeeping processes, and advancing child care practices.

The event featured insights from **Mr. Thiru. S. Thanasekarapandian**, *Joint Director, Dept of Social Defence, Govt of Tamil Nadu*, **Ms. Chhaya Gurav Raut**, *Chairperson Nagpur CWC*, **Mr. Manoranjan Dash**, *Technical Associate, Catholic Relief Services*, and **Youth Ambassador Mr. Albert Justin**.

Mr. Albert's personal experience underscored the crucial role of a stable family environment over Child Care Institutions (CCIs) in a child's development. He spoke about "Transition Model" and an "Aftercare Outreach Model," emphasizing the need for continued support after leaving care institutions and prevention as the ultimate solution to child's separation.

Mr. Thiru. S. Thanasekarapandian provided valuable perspectives on child protection practices in Tamil Nadu, highlighting initiatives such as residential induction training for CWC workforce, the State Child Policy 2021, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for children in conflict with the law, and successful partnerships with organisations like Miracle Foundation India, UNICEF etc

Ms. Chhaya, Chairperson of Nagpur CWC, discussed gatekeeping challenges, emphasizing early intervention by entities like Anganwadi workers, Gram Panchayats, and schools. Challenges, including coordination issues, were acknowledged, with proposed solutions focusing on convergence, strengthened efforts, law revisions, and community capacity building.

Mr. Manoranjan provided insightful perspectives on gatekeeping, emphasizing a systematic understanding, data-driven approaches, stakeholder engagement, and the role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and community leaders. The importance of district-specific child care plans, local gatekeeping processes, and collaboration with Panchayat Raj and PRI Standing Committees were highlighted.

The dialogue addressed questions on engaging children with disabilities and restructuring CCIs, highlighting the importance of community involvement and narratives in effective child care practices.

In conclusion, the event served as a platform to explore diverse prevention and gatekeeping models, recognising exemplary initiatives and practices at the CWC level. The engaging discussion underscored the significance of community involvement and narratives in effective child care practices. Miracle Foundation India plans to host additional dialogues, continuing the series on vital topics in child protection and family well-being, furthering their mission to enable every child to thrive in a loving and safe family. Participants enthusiastically voiced their desire for cross-learning, eagerly seeking opportunities to share their experiences, challenges, and potential solutions encountered at the grass-root level with fellow implementers.

Please refer to the link to the Leadership Dialogue. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6IUmfas4Y8&t=27s>

About the Author

Ms. Upasana Upadhaya is part of Miracle Foundation India, working as a Program Communications professional. With a background in Communications and development. She brings valuable expertise and passion to her role inspiring, engaging & driving real change in the lives of those she serves

State Level Consultation on Child Protection with Focus on Care Reforms

National Action & Coordination Group for Ending Violence Against Children, India (NACG-EVAC India) is a country-level civil society forum of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC), an apex body of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), with a vision that all children irrespective of gender, throughout South Asia enjoy their right to an environment free from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect & discrimination.

NACG-EVAC Jharkhand Chapter led by Bal Kalyan Sangh, Miracle Foundation India and Jharkhand State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (JSCPCR) organised a State Level Consultation On Child Protection with Focus On Care Reforms on December 7, 2023 in Ranchi



Purpose:

The purpose of the consultation was to deepen the collective understanding of Mission Vatsalya within the Child Protection sector, facilitate the exchange of knowledge, and spotlight innovative approaches for family strengthening & non-institutional care in Jharkhand. The special focus was on recognising the invaluable social workforce

Recognition:

Mr. MN Mandal, a lifelong Child Rights and anti-trafficking Activist was awarded a well-deserved lifetime achievement award.

Attendees:

100+ participants, including dignitaries from NACG-EVAC, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Jharkhand State Commission Protection of Child Rights (JSCPCR), Jharkhand State Child Protection Society (JSCPS), Centre Institute of Psychiatry (CIP), Jharkhand State Legal Service Authority (JHALSA), Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS), DCPUs, CWCs, and various CSOs attended in a day-long consultation session.

Outcome:

Some key outcomes were charting pathways for stronger convergence platforms and impactful family-strengthening initiatives in Jharkhand. It was recognised that a collective effort is needed towards a brighter future for the children and families of Jharkhand by the NACG-EVAC Jharkhand member organized