

**BREAKING
THE CYCLE**
PROTECTION, RESILIENCE & RECOVERY
for street connected children

2021 
CONFERENCE

**Therapeutic models for family
reunification: Interventions to
improve family relationships
and reduce violence within the
home**



Family Educational Approach Model

Railway Children Africa



BACKGROUND

RCA established in 2010 to support interventions for children on the streets with the aim of getting children back home.

Recent survey suggests more than 11,000 children on the streets.

Initial challenges in reintegration in early years – up to 50% drop out rates.

Struggling to Survive 2012; extreme violence prominent feature in lives of children on the streets.

Looked for solutions. JUCONI – partner of RC between 1999 and 2012. Adapted their approach in our work in Tanzania and Kenya.

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

The Tanzania Violence Against Children Study revealed that nearly 3 in 10 females and approximately 1 in 7 males in Tanzania have experienced sexual violence prior to the age of 18.

60% of both females and males experienced physical violence by adult relatives and more than one-half experienced physical violence by teachers before turning 18 years of age.

Violence has a direct impact on the psychological wellbeing of children and increases their vulnerability psychological trauma, curtails their access to education and further increase the risk of them dropping from home to the streets.

Family Reintegration Work Classification

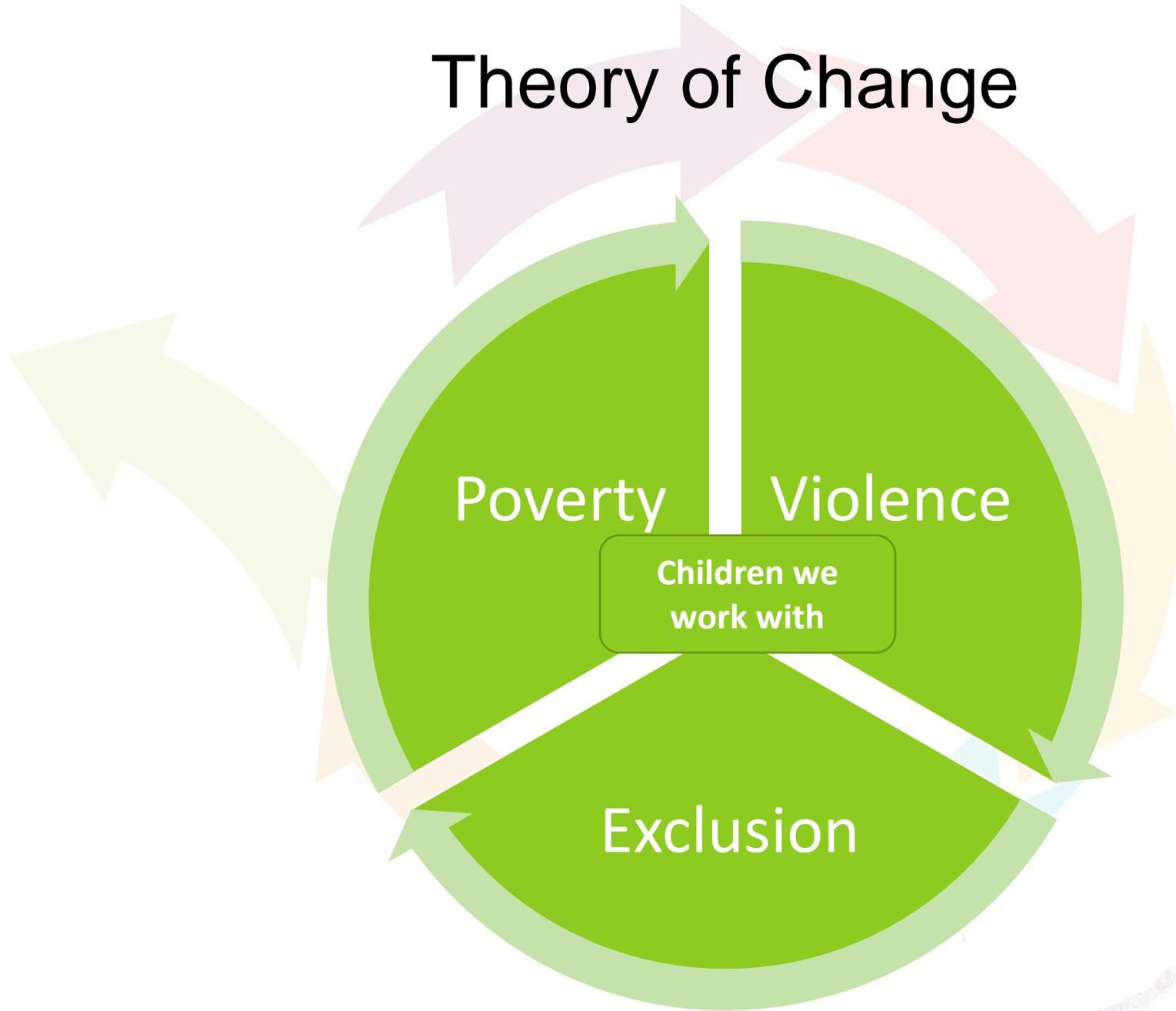
Intensive Family Work

- At least one caregiver is willing and available to work with.
- Child is willing to be reintegrated with the caregiver
- Child is on the streets especially if s/he has been on the streets for over 6 months
- Child has and/ or is experiencing at home: (even if one is selected it qualifies)
 - Extreme neglect
 - Sexual abuse
 - Extreme emotional and physical violence
- Local families to allow for the frequency of support

Non-Intensive Family Work

- Families are characterized by some economic difficulties,
- Parenting challenges but parents can think of their children's need.
- Child has been on the streets for less than six months.
- Long distance Families

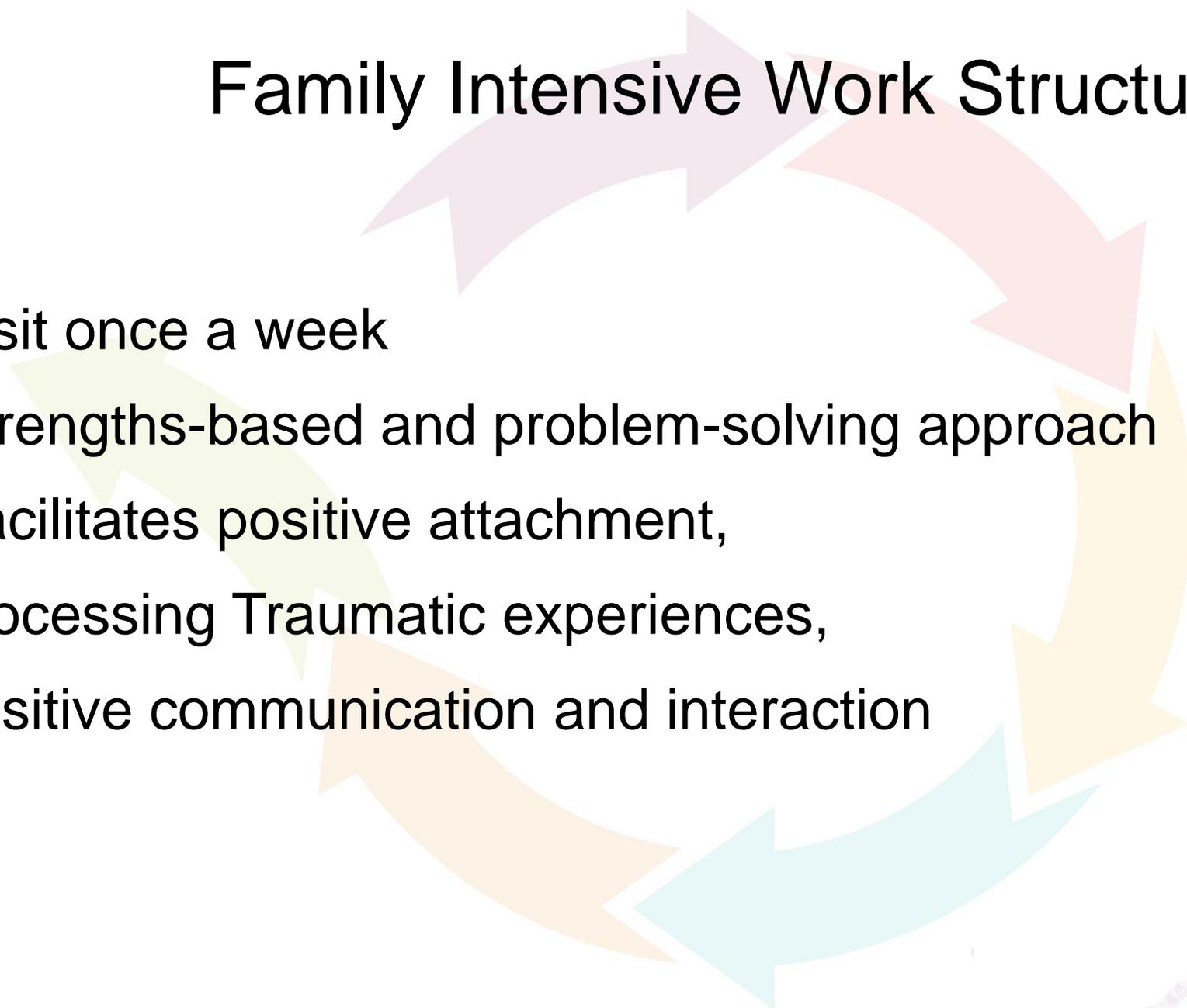
Theory of Change



What we want to Achieve

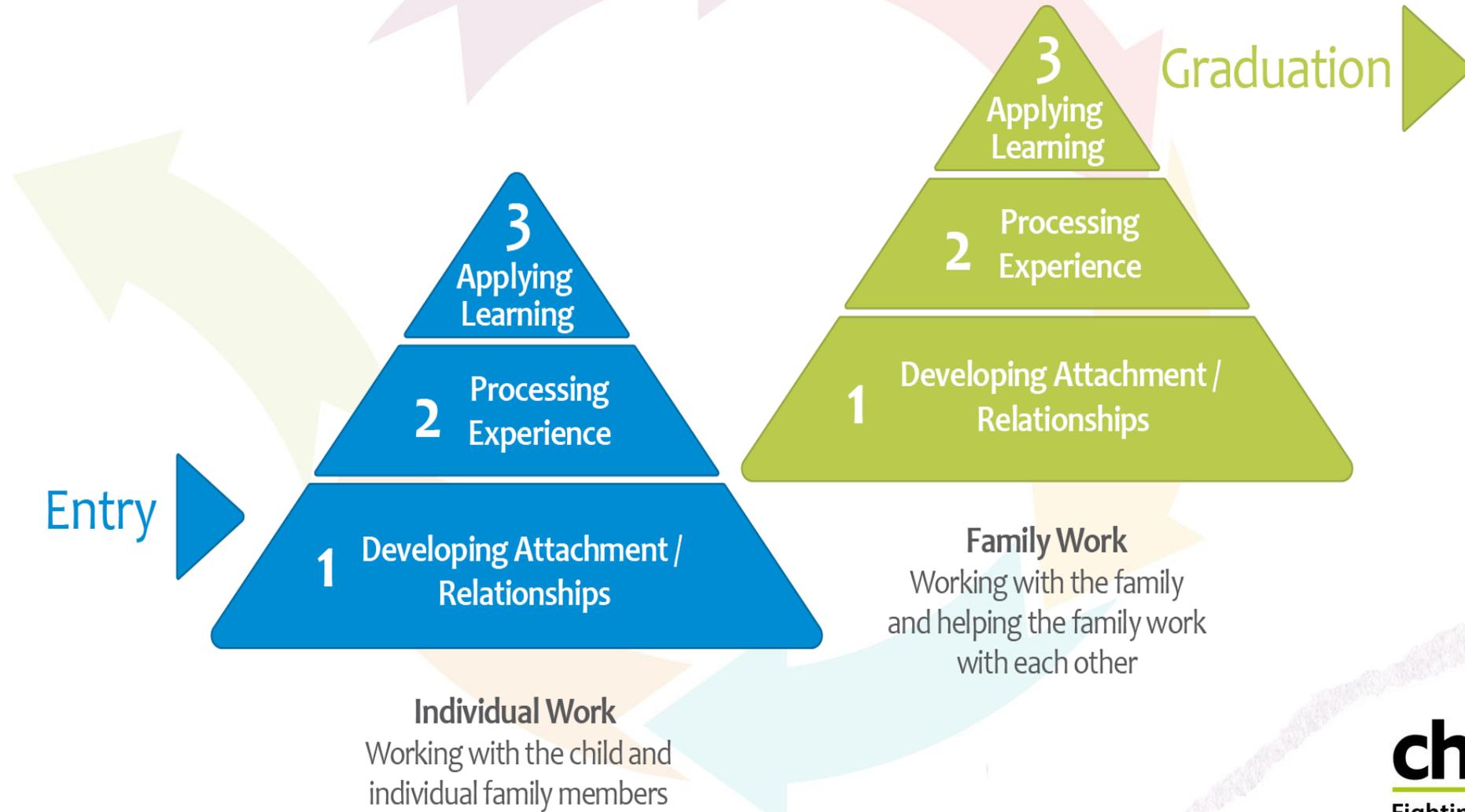
Children/Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Are safe<input type="checkbox"/> Are supported to process negative experiences that affect how they feel and behave<input type="checkbox"/> Are reintegrated in a safe and protective environment<input type="checkbox"/> Have good enough attachment with the parent/caregiver
Parents/Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Have improved parenting knowledge, skills, and behaviors<input type="checkbox"/> Have a support network - they know about and use community services and resources to meet their family's needs<input type="checkbox"/> Have improved relationships with their children<input type="checkbox"/> Feel more in control of their lives
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Have increased strengths / protective factors<input type="checkbox"/> Have reduced stressors / risk factors<input type="checkbox"/> Develop positive coping and communication

Family Intensive Work Structure



- Visit once a week
- Strengths-based and problem-solving approach
- Facilitates positive attachment,
- Processing Traumatic experiences,
- Positive communication and interaction

Family Therapeutic Model Working Framework



Source: Safe Families Safe Children

Family Therapeutic Model Working Framework

Stage	Focus
Developing Attachment Relationships	<p>Build a trusting and safe relationship with the family (children & parents) Share each others strengths, qualities and values. Encouraged to have some enjoyable moments together.</p> <p>Individual: Empathy, consistency, respect, attention, acceptance. Family: Trust, understanding, appreciation, shared positive experiences.</p>
Processing Experience	<p>Process past experiences to gain insight to their current situation and develop a sense of hope for the future. Understand each others experiences and how these affect them. How their actions affect others and how to support each other.</p> <p>Individual: Accessing the past, sharing pain, mourning. Family: Expressing feelings, mediating between emotion and action.</p>
Apply Learning	<p>Family using the strength learned to provide different kind of experience for all their members. Parents can show affection and meet needs of the children. Able to set short- and long-term goals to meet needs of the children without outside encouragement</p> <p>Individual/Family: Responsibility, reparation, healing, establishing and personal mission.</p>

Case study



Relationship Building/Attachment



Processing Experience



Applied Learning



Railway Children Africa - Family Reintegration Work

2018-2021

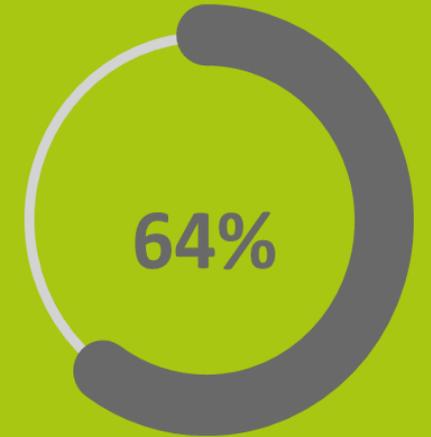
1,765 children have been reintegrated with their parents or extended families.



Children thriving at home and are in education after 1 year.



Families reported improved relationship.



Families received economic support.

Challenges/Solutions

- Normalization of violence towards children: **Need to build awareness across communities around violence and its impact on child development.**
- The problems faced by families are 'multi-dimensional' and the lack of coordination of various programs and services that apply to them is an ongoing challenge: **Family reintegration work needs to be embedded within the existing social structures to create a safety net for the families.**
- This approach is intense and is therefore high cost. It is not applicable or necessary for large numbers of children – BUT – **if we want to break cycles of violence, and leave no-one behind this approach can be scaled up to support the most excluded children to be reintegrated back into families.**

Lessons Learnt

- Interventions for a child are sustainable when the context also changes and key adults are instrumental in creating this, and becoming a resource for the child – **we have to support parents as much as do the child.**
- Need to build awareness in communities and government to create a shift from seeing street connected children as a problem to be solved, to a symptom of issues at home that have to be addressed – **and see families as part of the solution not the problem.**
- It is critical to provide for physical and practical needs alongside relational support – **but if we ignore the emotional relational needs the physical and practical support is not enough for the most traumatized families.**
- Invest in staff development to ensure that they are able to understand the meaning and potential causes of dysfunctional behavior. **Shift from-What is wrong with you- What happened to you?**