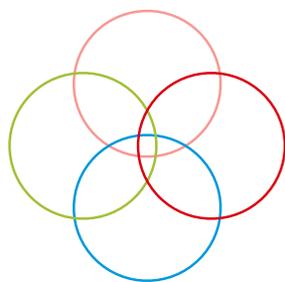


# NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AND ALTERNATIVE FAMILY BASED CARE



## Concept Note on Establishment of a National Alliance to Strengthen Families and Family Based Alternative Care in Tanzania.

### Introduction

*"... children without parental care are more likely than their peers to experience human rights violations, such as exclusion, violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and in this regard [UNGA] expresses deep concern on the potential harm of institutionalization and institutional care to children's growth and development...;"*<sup>1</sup>

*"Children living or working in the streets or public spaces are entitled to the respect, protection and fulfillment of all the rights set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child."*<sup>2</sup>— including the Right to a Family.

In Tanzania, as in all countries, children become separated from their parents for a range of reasons. These can include the death of one or more parents, sometimes due to HIV and AIDS, abuse, neglect, marital conflict and relationship breakdown. Other drivers that can increase stress in the home and impact on family separation include poverty, urbanization and unemployment. Complex needs around mental health or disability can put further pressure on families and caregivers. Parents' ability to adequately care for their children is also influenced by their own experiences as children. Challenges faced are exasperated by a lack of basic economic and social security within their families.

Tanzania has agreed to uphold the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 and the African Charter on the Rights and welfare of Children, 1990. These two charters and the 2009 UN Guidelines for Alternative Care for Children require member nations to ensure and promote the protection of children deprived of their family environment and those at risk of losing such an environment. This includes providing them with appropriate alternative care with preference being placed on family-based alternative care options such as foster care, kafalah and adoption. Thus, Tanzania has established a comprehensive legal framework aiming at enhancing and protecting children's rights. The Law of the Child Act and the several regulations made under it (the Child Protection Regulations, 2014, the Foster Care Placement Regulations, 2012, Adoption of a Child Regulations, 2011 and the Fit Persons Guidelines) acknowledge the importance of a family environment for children. Moreover, in dealing with the protection of children deprived of their family environment, the law emphasizes the use of family-based alternative care options over institutional care. Despite the existence of these legal frameworks and the affirmation on prioritization of family care, significant numbers of children without family care (biological and extended) end up on the streets or in institutional care.

Guided by the belief that all children should be cared for in a family environment, this coalition aims to contribute to alleviating the suffering that children go through growing up without parental care. It will achieve this by advocating for provision of quality family-based alternative care services in the country, including through the development and enforcement of guidelines, provision of alternative family care, family-reintegration, and by creating a platform whereby different examples and effective practice can be shared.

This coalition understands that creating a system of safe, family and community-based care that will meet the needs of ALL children separated from their families at ALL times will take several years. For this reason we are NOT advocating for the immediate closure of institutions that are currently caring for children UNTIL such time as safe and adequate, alternative family-based care options can be made available in each locality for every child in need.

<sup>1</sup> Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2019, Promotion and Protection of Children's Rights, (A/RES/74/133), para 26

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/children/children-street-situations>

## Note on definition of parental care:

In the Tanzanian context, when we refer to 'parental care', the meaning of the term 'parent' is that used and understood in Tanzania, and in Africa more broadly. In this context parental care includes situations where an adult, or adults from the wider family of the child have taken on the full and permanent responsibility of raising that child within their home, providing a parenting role in all that this entails; meeting basic physical needs, providing the love, care and nurturing children need to thrive, and that the child is treated as an equal member of the family.

## The Proposed Coalition Vision is that by 2030...

**All children in Tanzania are raised in a caring, supportive and protective family, at all times.**

## Proposed Mission

The national child protection system ensures that all children living without parental care are provided with safe alternative family-based care, and efforts are made to address causes for separation so that children can be safely reintegrated back to their families.

## Proposed Objectives

1. To advocate for legal, policy, and practice reforms that prioritize and enforce the provision of alternative family-based care for children without parental care.
2. To raise public awareness using campaigns and the media on the impact of violence on children, the importance of families for children's wellbeing and development and available opportunities for families to contribute in the provision of family-based alternative care services.
3. To provide a platform for sharing and disseminating knowledge and best practices on all forms of alternative family-based care and other family and community strengthening initiatives for children in need of care and protection.
4. To provide a platform for children, and others with lived experience of separation from their families, to influence and inform the development of policies and services designed to support children living without parental care.

## Founding Members

Founding members of the coalition are Railway Children Africa, UNICEF, Save the Children, Pamoja Leo and representatives from the University of Dar es Salaam, and the Open University. These organizations and individuals outlined the vision, mission and the objectives of the coalition. The vision and mission will remain unchanged; once these have been achieved the coalition will be disbanded.

## Mode of Operations

The coalition will not be formally registered as an independent entity but will act as an informal collective of agencies aligned under a common purpose. All work done under the coalition will be carried out by members of the coalition. There will not be an independently staffed secretariat; rather one member of the coalition will act as secretariat on behalf of all members, as outlined below.

Coalition members will come together to develop action plans for each of the coalition objectives, or to agree where to focus collective efforts, as resources allow. Working groups will be formed from the full membership under each objective, or under the priority objective each year, and these groups will develop an action plan to progress the coalition work in that area.

There will be quarterly meetings to review the progress towards implementation of the coalition objectives and plans. However, other ad hoc meetings shall be convened at any time if there is a crucial issue which needs immediate action or approval of members of the coalition

## Role of Secretariat

The secretariat will be responsible for convening meetings, organizing agendas, appointing a Chair and/or facilitator and a minute taker. The secretariat will be responsible for collating and distributing materials as necessary, and/or agreeing with the members who will do so for particular tasks and activities.

The person or agency carrying out this role should have sufficient time and resources to deliver the role effectively. The secretariat role will be reviewed each year, any member can put themselves forward to carry out the duties of the secretariat and a decision will be made by a vote of all members.

It is agreed that for the first year of operation Railway Children Africa will fulfill the secretariat role.

## Membership

The Coalition will be open to any local, national or international organizations that are interested in promoting family-based care for children; committed to and aligned with the coalition's vision and mission; and legally registered in Tanzania. Membership is open to NGOs, companies, media houses, associations and coalitions of children and young people with care experience, academic and research institutions and individuals with an interest in the welfare and rights of children living without parental care.

## Eligibility criteria

- Work in Tanzania;
- Share the coalition's Vision that by 2030 **All children in Tanzania are raised in a caring, supportive and protective family, at all times.** Be able to demonstrate their commitment to this vision within their own plans and operations.
- Be formally constituted and have a legal status according to the laws and usages of Tanzania at least two years prior to the application for membership.
- Have a child safeguarding policy within their organization.
- Be willing to learn, strengthen their skills and work in partnership, share expertise and support others to develop their capacity to deliver the mission and vision of the coalition.
- Demonstrate a documented track record in supporting family strengthening, gatekeeping and/or alternative family and community-based care.
- Have fulfilled all application requirements and have been approved as a member by the coalition core group.

## Application process

Any organization or person interested in joining the coalition should fill out the following form and email it to [Rose.kagoro@railwaychildren.or.tz](mailto:Rose.kagoro@railwaychildren.or.tz)

## Next Steps

- Share the concept note with other members through an organized face-to-face meeting.
- Agree priority areas for Year 1 – decide what is possible under each objective.
- Support research around the area that will inform the development of the framework.