

# EFFECT OF DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION ON CHILD PROTECTION; A CASE OF NYARUGENGE DISTRICT

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**Abstract:** Every child has the right to be safe from harm and being protected with adult. Nevertheless, every year the lives and physical, mental and emotional well-being of millions of children around the world are threatened by maltreatment such as abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation. Studies from around the world show that approximately 20 percent of women and 5 to 10 percent of men report having been sexually abused as children. The most common reasons for children being placed in the institution included death of one or both parents, genocide orphans, abandonment, chronic disease and poverty. The general objective of this study is to examine the effect of deinstitutionalization on child protection in Rwanda. The researcher was used descriptive research design. This study was used both quantitative and qualitative. The target population composed by 114 Children moved from institutions and placed within families. The Sloven's formula was applied to determine the exact sample size, sample size is 89 population. Children's preparation, Transition of children from institutions to families and Follow up children's families influence the Child protection in Nyarugenge District. R-square is 0.929%, this means that deinstitutionalization influence child protection in Nyarugenge District. ANOVA results further show that Children's preparation, Transition of children from institutions to families and Follow up children's families explain Child protection in Nyarugenge District. The sig value (0.000) less than the level significance (0.05). The F-statistics (F=214.145) is far greater than the P-value (0.000) hence a further confirmation that aspects of deinstitutionalization was significantly influenced Child protection in Nyarugenge District. Much has been done regarding to the government in the institutions as well as in the community through their district wide approach in implementing the national strategy for child care reform. Professionals have put an effort to make smooth implementation of the childcare reform. This was done through transitioning children from institutions into family-based care and the development of alternatives in respect of the principles of necessity and suitability. Researcher strongly recommended that, different institution including Hope and Homes for Children, (HHC) continuous close collaboration in management meetings concerning NCC/TMM professionals working in the districts where HHC operates. This should be done through various joint meetings and consultations towards common agreement before some resolutions about professionals and their deployment are implemented.

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## 1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

They are some of the incredible figures that show the magnitude of child protection violations around the world, they are under recognized and under reported and constitute barriers to the fulfillment of children's human rights. They also undermine children's healthy development and survival. These violations occur in every country, culture and social and economic group. However, children whose parents or caregivers are absent owing to illness, death or abandonment are more vulnerable to maltreatment, because they have lost their first line of protection and some of them placed in institution. (SAVE THE CHILDREN, 2013)

In Rwandan culture, a child is a treasure for the future of the family. He doesn't only belong to his/her biological family but also to the extended family and the community in general. It was family's responsibility to care about the child and raise him/her until she/he becomes adult. However, some children lost their parents during the genocide of 1994 which

left traditional systems of family and community care in Rwanda fragile. HIV/AIDS also increased the number of orphaned and vulnerable children and poverty continues to put an additional strain on families as results some children have been abandoned, and they lacked appropriate care. For longtime they have been living in miserable conditions and they needed a help. It is in this perspective that benevolent people got initiative to create orphanage/ institutions in response to that issue of children who were without anyone to take their care. It was a good idea and they helped a lot in different domains. The children were helped in living conditions, health, education, emotionally and psychologically.

Globally, UNICEF estimates that at least there are more than two million of children living in institutions worldwide (ANDREW, 2008). Global number of children living in institutions puts an estimate up to the total of eight million, though it given gaps in global statistics and indications that there are many unregistered children's homes, the true figure may well be much higher. Institutions in this case include all types of residential care, from small (15 or fewer children) to large-scale institutions. This number is considered by many to be a significant underestimate, given that many institutions around the world are unregistered and the children living within them are not officially counted. (UNICEF, 2018)

The Government of Rwanda is strongly committed to closing institutions/orphanages, reintegrating children safely into family-based environments and building a strengthened child protection system, Rwanda has come closer than any other country to achieving this goal. Two decades after Rwanda's genocide in 1994, the country's government is heavily invested in the well-being of its young orphaned generation. (NCC, 2012).

Reform is essential for different reasons, one of them, is that the big institutions are poisonous. John Williamson of the Better Care Network, and Aaron Greenberg of the UN argue that for every three months that a child stays in an institution he or she loses one month of development. Since 2000 American academics have kept track of 136 children from orphanages in Romania. They have found that the IQ levels of children who remain in big care homes are lower than those put in foster care; both groups had lower scores than those who were not institutionalized at all.

Rwanda is not only the country which is implementing this program because, in Romania, once notorious for its decrepit orphanages, the number of children living in institutions has dropped from more than 32,000 in 2004 to about 9,000 in 2013. In Moldova the total fell by 62% between 2007 and 2012. Georgia had 41 institutions ten years ago and 2013 it has three. On March 16, 2012 Rwandan Cabinet of Ministers endorsed a landmark Strategy for National Child Care Reform document, the strategy foresees to close down and transform all orphanages As an entry point to building sustainable child care and protection systems and it details how children living in institutions should regain their right to live in a loving, safe and supportive family environment.

The newly established National Commission for Children was then tasked to oversee the successful reintegration of children, the creation of a system of alternative care and the transition towards a strengthened child protection system. (NCC, 2012). It is in this regard the Government of Rwanda is refocusing to the system by transforming Rwanda's current child care and protection into family-based system. The aim is to place the children who are living in institutions, in biological or extended families and other in foster families or alternative family-based care systems as opposed to orphanages as well to support vulnerable families to remain together and promote positive Rwandan social values that encourage all Rwandans and their communities to take care of vulnerable children, through fostering or adoption.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Every child has the right to be safe from harm and being protected with adult. Nevertheless, every year the lives and physical, mental and emotional well-being of millions of children around the world are threatened by maltreatment such as abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation. Studies from around the world show that approximately 20 percent of women and 5 to 10 percent of men report having been sexually abused as children. (FHI360, 2012). Violation of child protection was present in Rwanda. Since the devastating effect of 1994 Genocide against TUTSI significant progress has been made towards improving the status of children in Rwanda.

According the survey done by MIGEPROF in 2012 a total of 3323 children and young adults were reported to be resident in 33 institutions. The most common reasons for children being placed in the institution included death of one or both parents, genocide orphans, abandonment, chronic disease and poverty. However years after years as those institutions continued to receive many children, the quality of service provided started decreasing. In addition, due to a big number of children and young adults vice little number of care givers in these different institutions, caring about them became very

costing. Consequently, the children started suffering from carelessness and especially lack of individualized care and affection. Those children started to manifest challenging behaviors and maladaptation to the social norms and rules. They were not opened to the life outside the institution because they passed many years in the institutions. (MIGEPROF, 2012).

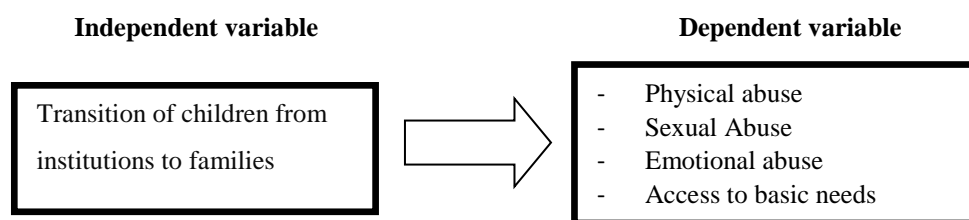
In response, the government of Rwanda has taken initiative of closing orphanages, and reintegrating children safely into family based environment and building strengthened child protection system. Government together with Hope and homes for children decided to adopt a reintegration using professional way. It means respecting steps, using professionals in such activities and plan for it. These measures were taken because the previous attempts to reintegrate children from institutions failed even before one year of reunification and the children returned in the institutions or on street (Elizabeth, 2006).

Since 2014 up to 2017 more than 2500 children and young adult reintegrated by this new professional program. Although they are reintegrated, no research conducted about how child protection is maintained it is in this regard the research wants to assess the effect of deinstitutionalization on child protection in Rwanda.

### 3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the effect of transition of children from institutions to families on the child protection in Nyarugenge District.

### 4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



### 5. RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher was used descriptive research design. It was also be interested in obtaining data from Children reintegrated in families from orphanages. This study was used both quantitative and qualitative. In data collection interview protocol was used for qualitative data and questionnaire for getting quantitative data. The analysis of qualitative data was used thematic analysis and quantitative data was used.

### 6. POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The target population composed by 114 Children moved from institutions and placed within families. Research was taken into consideration children reintegrated.

### 7. SAMPLE SIZE

A representative sample must reflect the various key aspects of the population. The Sloven's formula was applied to determine the exact sample size:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}, \text{ Where; } n = \text{the required sample size; } N = \text{the known population size; and } e = \text{the level of significance,}$$

which is = 0.05.

The table below indicates the sample size in Nyarugenge District.

The populations are children, who moved from institution and reintegrated within families live in Nyarugenge district.

$$\text{Sample size: Sample size: } n = \frac{114}{1 + 114(0.05)^2} = 89 \text{ children}$$

### 8. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

A standardized questionnaire to cover all the 89 sampled respondents was used, and interview guide was also used for parents and local leaders in order to cover all areas of interest.

## 9. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**Table1: The effect of transition of children from institutions to families in Nyarugenge District**

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1 The transition of child from institutions to family is well organized in Nyarugenge District.	-	-	-	17%	83%
2 Children appreciate the transition from institution to new families.	-	8%	5%	25%	62%
3 Child transition is well organized in Nyarugenge District.	1%	6%	-	77%	16%
4 Government institution involved on the transition of children from institutions to families in Nyarugenge District.	-	-	-	38%	62%

The above Table1, show the effect of transition of children from institutions to families in Nyarugenge District. As shown by the perception of respondents 100% of respondents agreed that the transition of child from institutions to family is well organized in Nyarugenge District before transit child to a new family. 87% of respondents were appreciated the transition of children from institution to new family. According to MIGEPROF report, (2015), Rwanda is home to 101,000 children who live in households by themselves in 42,000 households. Child abuse, sexual exploitation, child labor are still child protection risks in Rwanda. Government institution always involved on the transition of children from institutions to families in Nyarugenge District.

Talking about child rights, care and protection without mentioning those who hold primary legal obligation to ensure the child protection and care would be understood that all stakeholders have equal domestic roles, responsibilities and regional and international obligations towards child protection and care in the new family. While the issue of child protection in new family is a duty of every family-*Ufate umwana wese nk'uwawe*, it should be understood by the reader that the International Convention on the Rights of a Child and other related Protocols and instruments impose primary responsibility of child protection to specific actors.

### 9.1 Regression analysis

**Table 2: Model summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.953 <sup>a</sup>	.929	.905	.160

a. Predictors: (Constant), Children's preparation, Transition of children from institutions to families and Follow up children's families

According to results in Table 2, show that, Children's preparation, Transition of children from institutions to families and Follow up children's families influence the Child protection in Nyarugenge District. R-square is 0.929%, this means that deinstitutionalization influence child protection in Nyarugenge District. The rule of Thumb is that, usually an R square of more than 50% is considered as better. This study proves the rule of Thumb the R<sup>2</sup> is (92.9).

**Table 3: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.930	3	5.483	214.145	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	2.202	85	.026		
	Total	24.132	88			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Children's preparation, Transition of children from institutions to families and Follow up children's families.

b. Dependent Variable: Child protection

ANOVA results further show that Children's preparation, Transition of children from institutions to families and Follow up children's families explain Child protection in Nyarugenge District. The table above 3 shows the sig value (0.000) less than the level significance (0.05). The F-statistics (F=214.145) is far greater than the P-value (0.000) hence a further confirmation that aspects of deinstitutionalization was significantly influenced Child protection in Nyarugenge District.

**Table 4.1: Coefficient**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.671	.145		4.618	.000
	Children's preparation	.88	.085	.505	5.264	.000
	Transition of children from institutions to families	.783	.084	.329	3.361	.000
	Follow up children's families	.653	.069	.057	.653	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Child protection

Using linear regression analysis from SPSS data bases shows that deinstitutionalization influences the child protection in Nyarugenge District. When Children's preparation increases one unit, child protection increased 0.88% when other variable, transition of children from institutions to families and follow up children's families were constant.

## 10. CONCLUSION

As illustrated above, much has been done regarding to the government in the institutions as well as in the community through their district wide approach in implementing the national strategy for child care reform. Professionals have put an effort to make smooth implementation of the childcare reform. This was done through transitioning children from institutions into family-based care and the development of alternatives in respect of the principles of necessity and suitability. Professionals provided its expertise to the local authorities before and during their service and worked with them on a daily basis to ensure they are well equipped with all required knowledge, tools and skills when working for (with) children, families and communities.

## 11. RECOMMENDATIONS

However, though efforts were made and much was achieved by the government of Rwanda, some challenges were met and some gaps still need to be corrected. Therefore, Researcher strongly recommended that, different institution including Hope and Homes for Children, (HHC) continuous close collaboration in management meetings concerning NCC/TMM professionals working in the districts where HHC operates. This should be done through various joint meetings and consultations towards common agreement before some resolutions about professionals and their deployment are implemented.

In addition, HHC continuous refresher trainings to professionals should be provided for proper implementation of the strategy. This refresher training should be done on a quarterly basis to share on key achievements and get time to discuss on case management and required techniques.

Gatekeeping/preventative mechanisms need to be strengthened alongside the transition of children from institutions to act effectively in strengthening a family/community-based child protection system able to address family needs and to timely provide proactive solution and avoid unnecessary separation of children from their families. The allocation of staff and resources to districts should take into consideration the caseload to allow effective and efficient use of human and financial resource in supporting children, families and communities.

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