



INSIGHT

Case Management: A Scalable Model for Reintegration of Children without Parental Care in Kenya

Effective and sustainable reintegration requires a solid conceptual framework and an appropriate and standardized case management approach. Kenya was lacking a comprehensive, participatory, and standardized package that included guidance, standard operating procedures, tools and training on what and how to conduct case management to ensure the wellbeing and eventual family placement of children without parental care. This gap often resulted in programming practice of varying quality and inadequate resources

committed to reintegration of children into families. To ensure a significant improvement in service delivery to children and their families, and specifically to the successful reintegration of children from residential care into families and communities, a case management approach, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and tools were required to support state and non-state service providers to standardize the way they promoted family care.

Defining case management for reunification

Case management is the process of ensuring that an identified child has his/her needs for care, protection, and support met. This is usually the responsibility of an allocated social worker who meets with the child, the family, and any other caregivers and professionals involved with the child in order to assess, plan, deliver, or refer the child and/or family for services, and monitor and review progress.

The package [Case Management for Reintegration of Children into Family or Community Based Care](#) was developed in response to these gaps and to a growing interest in comprehensive case management as a core approach within a child protection and care system. The package has proven to be a valuable and practical tool to help overcome these challenges and to ensure that successful reintegration becomes a reality for as many children as possible. It is also designed to reflect the content and implementation of the [Guidelines for the Alternative Family Care of Children in Kenya](#) (2014) and the [Guidelines on Child Protection Case Management and Referral](#) (2018) for children without parental care or those who are at risk of separation.

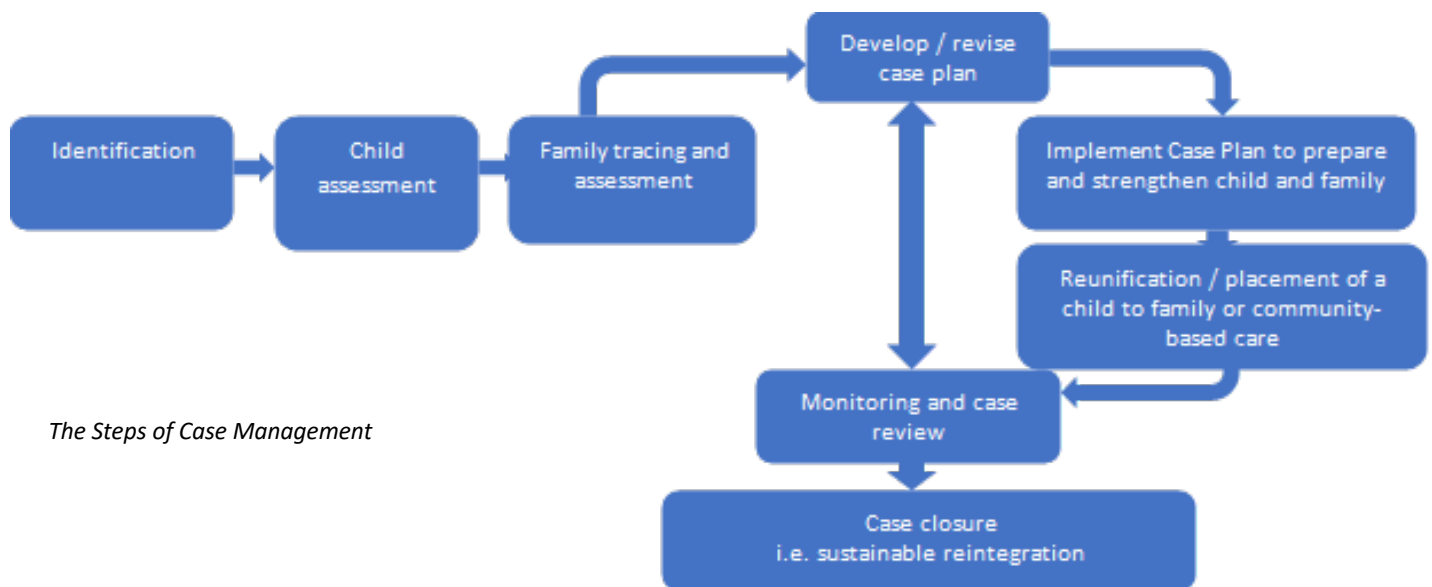
DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

The protection of children without parental care is a complex issue and therefore needs a multi-disciplinary approach. *Changing the Way We Care*SM (CTWWC), in collaboration with the Kenyan Directorate of Children’s Services (DCS) and other stakeholders in Kenya, developed the package Case Management for Reintegration of Children into Family or Community Based Care, which includes guidance, SOPs, job aids, tools, and training materials all designed to support practitioners in their work towards safe and nurturing family care

of children. The package was purposefully developed to be disability inclusive.

It provides guidance on how reunification and eventual successful reintegration can be achieved through a process that includes eight steps (see *visual below*) of comprehensive preparation of the child and caregiver, assessment, planning, preparation, reunification/placement and monitoring. It is centered around strength-based principles that have shown to enhance decision making and ownership of the child and caregiver and build resilience. This strength-lens was often lacking in conventional approaches used for reunification of children; a process that was often ad-hoc and occurred at the discretion of individual Charitable Children’s Institutions (CCIs).

There was no standardized approach and most CCIs considered reintegration only when children “aged out.” The new package is evidence-informed and provides a series of benchmarks designed for the Kenyan context around different areas of wellbeing. The benchmarks are integrated throughout the different tools and help the case worker identify the strengths and needs of each child and family and determine when the child and caregiver have met certain thresholds of wellbeing. This information helps guide the case plan and determine when a reintegration process is



The Steps of Case Management

considered safe and suitable for closure from case management. The package is anchored in a common set of principles and clearly articulates a roadmap of the different steps of case management, and who does what at which step. It is envisioned that the new case management package—together with the Child Protection Case Management and Referral and Alternative Family Care Guidelines—will be used to standardize the way all service providers promote family- and community-based care and protection for children outside of parental care in Kenya.

HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED

The rollout of the package focused on creating a pool of national-level facilitators and county-level trainers of trainers who participated in a five-day training. These trainings involved pilot testing of the tools with staff and children in CCIs to assess feasibility, followed by a five-day cascade training in three demonstration counties.



Photo by Beth Bradford for Changing the Way We Care

Quantifiable Results

As part of the strategy to support rollout, CTWWC, in collaboration with government and other care reform actors, trained 446 national and county staff. A total of 107 CCIs in four counties are currently trained and are utilizing case management for the reunification of children and to support the long-term reintegration within families.

CTWWC also adopted social work models to strengthen workforce capacity, including quarterly supportive supervision, monthly on-the-job training, and bi-annual reflection sessions designed to strengthen the knowledge and skills needed to effectively use the package. CTWWC also developed a simple set of monitoring indicators to track the progress of children and families through the case management process, as well as to measure the quality of implementation and outcomes linked to children's well-being and caregivers' protective factors. Monitoring results were utilized by supervisors and during reflection sessions to inform adaptation.

Numerous organizations and individuals were involved in creating this package. The Directorate of Children's Services provided leadership in the development of the package as part of the care reform agenda. CTWWC and UNICEF provided technical and financial support. Other NGOs engaged in the process including SOS Children's Villages Kenya, Stahili Foundation, Hope and Homes for Children, CCIs, and Kenyan Society of Care Leavers.

For effective use of the case management package, resources must be allocated to technical trainings, printing, on-site mentorship and coaching for the trained staff. Resources are needed to support short-and-long-term monitoring of reintegrated cases, and supportive supervision sessions for case managers. The package recommends a case load of

20 children and families per social worker, resulting in higher caseload ratios than the norm.

The case management package has been adopted by the Government of Kenya as a national guideline. It was rolled out in four of 47 counties, as part of the country's effort to pilot and learn prior to national rollout. The selection of the four areas was based on urban, rural, and semi-urban settings, culture, and population.

The government oversaw the national rollout. A pool of national and county-level trainers, employed by the government, was certified to support the field-based trainings. The package was certified and launched together with Kenya's National Care Reform Strategy and used to enhance the national Child Protection Information Management System. Many CCIs have institutionalized the case management package to support reintegration, and CTWWC has also used the package to inform the development of guidelines for prevention of family separation.



photo by Felix Boyd for Changing the Way We Care

CONCLUDING INSIGHTS

Case management has always been at the core of CTWWC's approach to scaling family care. There are several successes to date, including the examples shared in this brief.

- It is important to ensure adequate staffing, as case management is a labor-intensive approach.
- Staff benefit from ongoing coaching, mentoring and a supportive supervision model.
- To promote ownership of the process and effectiveness of outcomes, participatory and strengths-based approaches should meaningfully engage children and caregivers.
- Government ownership and funding of the package, including the rollout, is critical component to sustainability.
- The case management approach should be designed to address the prevention of separation, as well as reintegration into family.

Need to know more? Contact *Changing the Way We Care* at, info@ctwwc.org or visit changingthewaywecare.org

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