

GROWING UP IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE: CHILDREN IN CRISIS

Millions of children around the world grow up without ever experiencing the love and stability of permanent families.

140 MILLION



HAVE LOST ONE OR BOTH
PARENTS¹

15 MILLION



ARE "DOUBLE ORPHANS"
(HAVE LOST BOTH PARENTS)¹

2-8 MILLION



LIVE IN INSTITUTIONS²

All too often they are abused, involved in crime, using drugs, mentally and physically unwell, impoverished, and prostitutes.

INSTITUTIONAL CARE IS FAILING THESE CHILDREN

Although some institutions are well-resourced with dedicated staff, they cannot replace a family.



DIGGING DEEPER

Numerous studies, including 80 years of research and more recent neuroscience, have noted long-term, often irrecoverable, negative impacts of institutional care on children. Some of these negative impacts include delayed physical and brain growth; insecure attachment; slow language development; and poor cognitive, emotional, and social development.³ The results show:

DELAYED PHYSICAL GROWTH

Children in institutional care consistently show growth suppression, specifically in decreased weight, height, and head circumference,³ caused by⁴:



POOR HYGIENE



POOR NUTRITION



OVERCROWDING



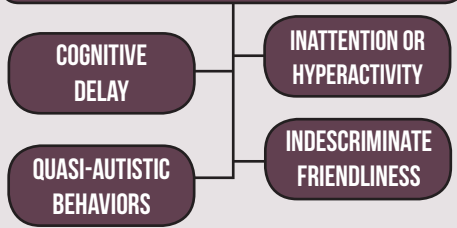
LACK OF ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE

POOR SOCIAL AND

PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Behavioral difficulties are so prevalent in institutionalized children a term was created for diagnosis⁴:

INSTITUTIONAL DEPRIVATION SYNDROME



LOWER IQ LEVELS AND BRAIN ACTIVITY

Studies conclude children raised in institutional care have lower IQs than those raised in family based care.³

THE AVERAGE IQ OF CHILDREN RAISED IN INSTITUTIONS⁵

84



THE AVERAGE IQ OF CHILDREN RAISED IN BIRTH OR FOSTER FAMILIES⁵

104

ATTACHMENT ISSUES

A lack of positive adult interaction from consistent caregivers can limit children's ability to develop personal confidence and key social skills.⁴



Poor bottle-feeding practices where infants are fed lying on their backs to save time prevents children from learning to feed properly and experiencing physical contact, both of which cause physical, behavioral and cognitive problems.⁴



FROM MISSED MILESTONES TO HEALTHY GROWTH

Othniel was given up to an orphanage in India shortly after he was born. He is blind and has a severe case of cerebral palsy, conditions that need special attention that he did not receive at the orphanage.

For two years, Othniel lay on his back in crib, alone, surviving on only bottles of milk. **He missed multiple developmental milestones because the orphanage could not provide him the specialized care he needed.** At three years old, Othniel could not speak, stand or walk, and eat solid food. Thankfully, Othniel's life drastically changed the day a local family adopted him.

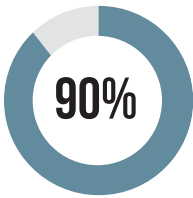
Othniel blossomed after leaving the orphanage and receiving care from his new family. While he still had severe intellectual disabilities, he began to speak, calling his father Appa (Dad) and the women of the house DeeDee (sister). He learned to eat solid foods and developed proper sleeping habits.

There is no doubt that Othniel's best chance of survival is with family, not alone in an orphanage. He will continue to progress developmentally and physically under the individualized attention of a mother and father.

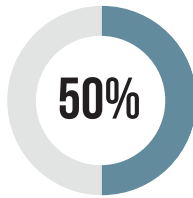
ORPHAN “GRADUATES”

Institutional care is creating ‘lost generations’ of young people who are unable to fully participate in society. When children reach a certain age, usually 18, they must leave the orphanage. These young adults are frequently unprepared for independent life, resulting in unemployment, homelessness, conflict with the law, sexual exploitation, and poor parenting—issues often requiring increased expenses for health, education, and legal services. This may result in longer-term costs to society.⁶

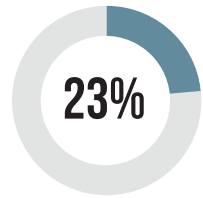
In Ukraine, 12,000 orphans graduate from institutional care each year.⁷ Of these ⁷:



ARE NOT READY TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY



ARE PRONE TO COMMIT CRIMES



BECOME HOMELESS



Having never experienced adequate care themselves, some children who have been poorly cared for go on to neglect and abuse their own children, creating a **vicious cycle of harm**.⁶

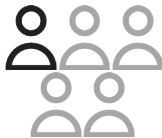


A US study of adults who had experienced abuse and neglect as children found that they had a **14% lower employment rate** than the general population, were less likely to have a bank account, vehicle, or home, and reported far lower earnings over their lifetimes.⁸

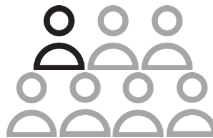
Survey data in Russia showed outcomes for children who grew up in institutions ⁹:



1 IN 3
BECAME HOMELESS



1 IN 5
ENDED UP WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD



1 IN 7
BECAME INVOLVED IN PROSTITUTION



1 IN 10
COMMITTED SUICIDE

MEET AN ORPHAN “GRADUATE”

Alex was brought to an orphanage in India when he was only nine months old. He’s accepted the story that his mother died of tuberculosis when he was six months old and his father was the one who brought him to the orphanage, only to die not long after. Alex has few memories of living in the orphanage, but he will never forget how it made him feel.

It was the feeling of being unloved.

Many of his friends at the orphanage had a living parent or parents. Even though they were not living at home, they had the privilege of getting new clothes, receiving sweets and chocolates, and occasionally going on vacation. Alex became envious and began to rebel. He was harshly punished for “acting up” and eventually fled from the orphanage only to find himself being sent back time and time again. He describes the orphanage as a prison he couldn’t leave.

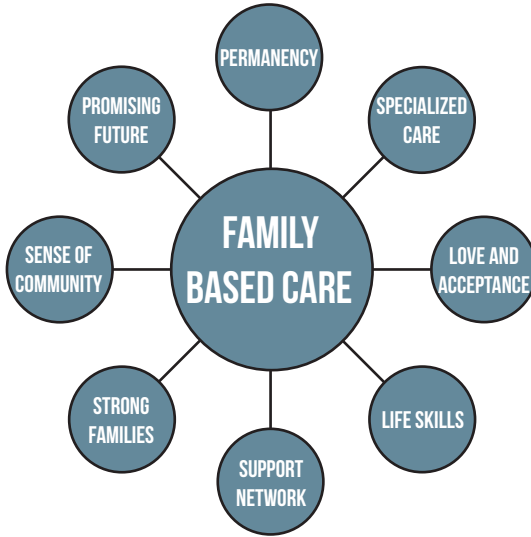
When he was ten years old, Alex ran away from the orphanage for the last time and lived on the streets. He made a meager living by sweeping people’s feet on the train but was often robbed. He started to smuggle drugs and did until he was seventeen years old.

By the grace of God, Alex saw what his life had become. He did not become a statistic. His friends were dying and he knew he was meant for so much more. Alex now devotes his life to helping the fatherless as the leader of India Without Orphans and has adopted children of his own.



THE SOLUTION

Family based care is the solution, and efforts on all parts of the spectrum must be implemented if we are to see these children thrive.



To see a resolution to the global orphan crisis, efforts must be taking place on the ground, led by local Christian leaders who understand the culture, are committed to best practices, and can utilize their regional networks to encourage and equip families to open their hearts and homes to orphans and vulnerable children.

A Family for Every Orphan (AFFEO) provides funding, program strategy assistance, project development and fiscal accountability for national teams from nine countries. These nationally-led teams are:



WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP LAWS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR ORPHAN CARE



GETTING CHURCHES INVOLVED IN ORPHAN CARE THROUGH FOSTER, ADOPTION AND REUNIFICATION



BUILDING STRONG NETWORKS



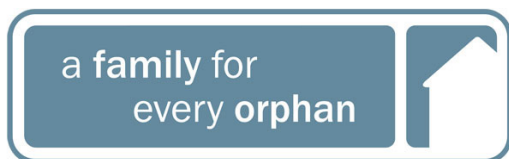
SHIFTING CULTURAL MINDSETS TOWARDS FAMILY BASED CARE

THE SOLUTION IN ACTION

Sasha is a miracle—he weighed less than two pounds at birth and doctors were certain he would not survive. He had HIV, passed on to him by his birth mother, and a number of other serious health issues. The doctors believed he would grow up to have severe mental disabilities. Abandoned at the hospital, he grew up in a state orphanage for children with special needs. He did not engage well with others and was often aggressive.

Things began to look up for Sasha when a mentor from a local church began to visit. This mentor warmly cared for Sasha and began tutoring him in preparation for school. In just a short period of time, Sasha has radically changed. Now eight years old, he has become a good-natured, active and extremely curious child. He loves cycling, drawing and singing. Through multiple tests, the doctors confirmed that Sasha does not have the mental disabilities they originally thought, and he has happily and successfully began to learn to read and is now working with a speech therapist. Today, Sasha is adopted and under the loving care of a wonderful couple!





MISSION

A Family for Every Orphan helps orphans find loving Christian families in their home countries

VISION

Our vision is a world without orphans

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GIVE

All gifts are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law

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