Examining Family Care versus Institutional Care in Kenya: 
Implications for Children’s Emotional adjustment, 
Socio-emotional development and Cognitive development

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INTRODUCTION

- Institutional care is the most common type of care for children who’s parents can not raise and protect them throughout the world.
- Research has shown adverse effects of institutional care on children’s development compared to family reared children;
  - Early deprivation affects socio-emotional development as well as cognitive development (Nelson et al., 2007; MacLean, 2003; Johnson et al., 2006).
  - A child raised in institutional care often lacks a consistent primary caregiver, hence the child is deprived the supportive, intensive and one to one relationship that is essential for optimal development.
  - Family-reared children show more optimal development at all areas compared to institutional reared children (Ghera et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 2007; Smyke et al., 2007; Fisher et al., 1997).
- Alternative care in Kenya is based on Charitable Children’s Institutions (CCIs). Over 700 (CCIs) house approximately 43,000 children whereas only approximately 828 children are placed in family settings within a period of 5 years.

MEASURES

- Socio-Emotional Adjustment;
  - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997).
  - Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983).
- Children’s Academic Achievement;
  - Mock Report Card (Pierce et al.,1999).
  - Child’s school grades.
- Demographic Questionnaires: Assessing child and family characteristics.

GOAL

- To assess differences in emotional adjustment, cognitive development and socio emotional development between institutional-reared and family-reared children.

HYPOTHESIS

- Children raised in family care will show better outcomes in cognitive & socio-emotional development as well as better emotional adjustment compared to institutionalized children.

IMPLICATIONS

- The current research will be conducted in Kenya, a developing country, it is anticipated that;
  - The findings of the current study will help enlighten the effects of institutionalization on children as well as the impact of a family care environment on children’s development.
  - The findings will hopefully have implications for over forty thousand children who are under Charitable Children’s Institutions care in Kenya and,
  - Enhance better practice for childcare practitioners as well as serve as a basis for intervention work to support the well-being of children in Kenya.

METHOD

- 150 children aged 10-12 years will be recruited from, Charitable Children’s Institutions, family care settings as well as children living with their families that have never be institutionalized;
- Each group will include fifty children, boys and girls.
- Consent letters to conduct this research will be obtained from the Department of Children’s Services.
- Home, schools and institutions visits will be made to administer questionnaires.

PARTICIPANTS

- 50 Children from institutional care
- 50 Control Group Children from the community who live with their families, never institutionalized
- 50 Children from family care settings (Adoption, Kinship Care, Fostering)
- 150 Participants

CONCLUSION

- This research is the first work of its kind in Kenya. It aspires to contribute to our knowledge regarding the factors influencing care systems in Kenya as well as provide insight into some of the issues adoptive parents, foster parents and kinship care might be facing and,
  - Presumably the results will be used by the Department of Children’s Services to strengthen Child Protection System in Kenya.