

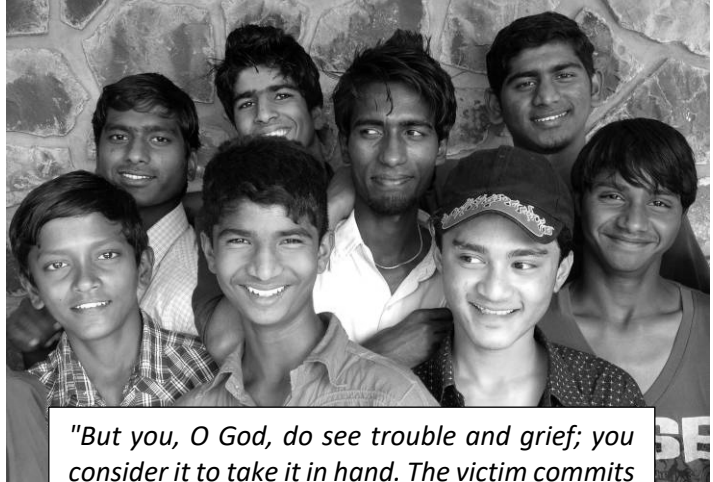
FIRST FRUIT, FBC DISCUSSION PAPER:

1. OVC, FBC: an ongoing journey of discovery

For the past months, I have, in a more intentional way, begun to engage with World Without Orphans (WWO). They describe themselves as a “movement” Advocating for a change in the understanding and care of the orphan.

Definition of a movement: *a group of people working together to advance their shared political, social, or artistic ideas, a campaign undertaken by a group of people working together.* When I think of a “Movement of God” it is beyond mans efforts, God is in control and man responds. I love how Rob explained it to me. He said “a Movement is like a compass pointing participants in a direction and an Organization is a GPS which is seeking to get from point A to B”.

As First Fruit participates we have the opportunity to be a participant in the movement as we learn and test through direct projects seeking to get participants from point A to B.



"But you, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in hand. The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless." Psalm 10:14

In this paper my goal is to connect you with the Need, Response and how I am orienting First Fruits Granting and Operational Modality as it pertains to Family Based Care.

2. Understanding the Global Orphan and Vulnerable Child:

UNICEF estimates that there are 163 million orphans in the world, 8 million of whom are living in institutions. One of the misunderstandings about these 8 million children is that they are there because they have no parents. At least four out of five children in institutional care have one or both parents alive, and usually, the parent is simply unable to care for the child because of poverty, the root of the majority of OVC issues. Vulnerability is not, however, solely brought on by the loss of one or both parents. It can also be an outcome of disabilities, refugee status, sex trafficking, minority position, children in the workplace, etc.; the list is endless. Just as "trouble and grief" come in so many different forms, so do the helps and solutions for the OVC.

Definitions:

For our purpose, we need to have a common definition / understanding of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) as well as Family Based Care (FBC)

- *General:* as those children who are most at risk of facing increased negative outcomes compared to the “average” child in their Society. (World Bank)

- *Orphan*: A child under the age of 18 that has lost 1 at least parent or single orphan. (UNICEF) This does not mean they are now in institutional care. The majority are still in a family context.
- *First Fruit definition of Orphan*: A child 18 or younger that does not have a family to care for their needs, or has been abandoned into institutional care. *(is without protective affiliation or sponsorship, has been deserted, not part of a system, deprived of parents)*
- *Vulnerable Child*: a child who could become an orphan if their families cannot provide the support they need, either physical or social. *(susceptible, open to assault, difficult to defend)*
- *Family*: A mother and father providing oversight to ensure the best interests of the child are being met. *(this could be biological extended family, aunt, uncle, grandmother or non-biological, foster care or adoption)*

An interesting question: When adoptive or Foster Families are identified do they need to be Christian?

3. Vulnerability Scale:

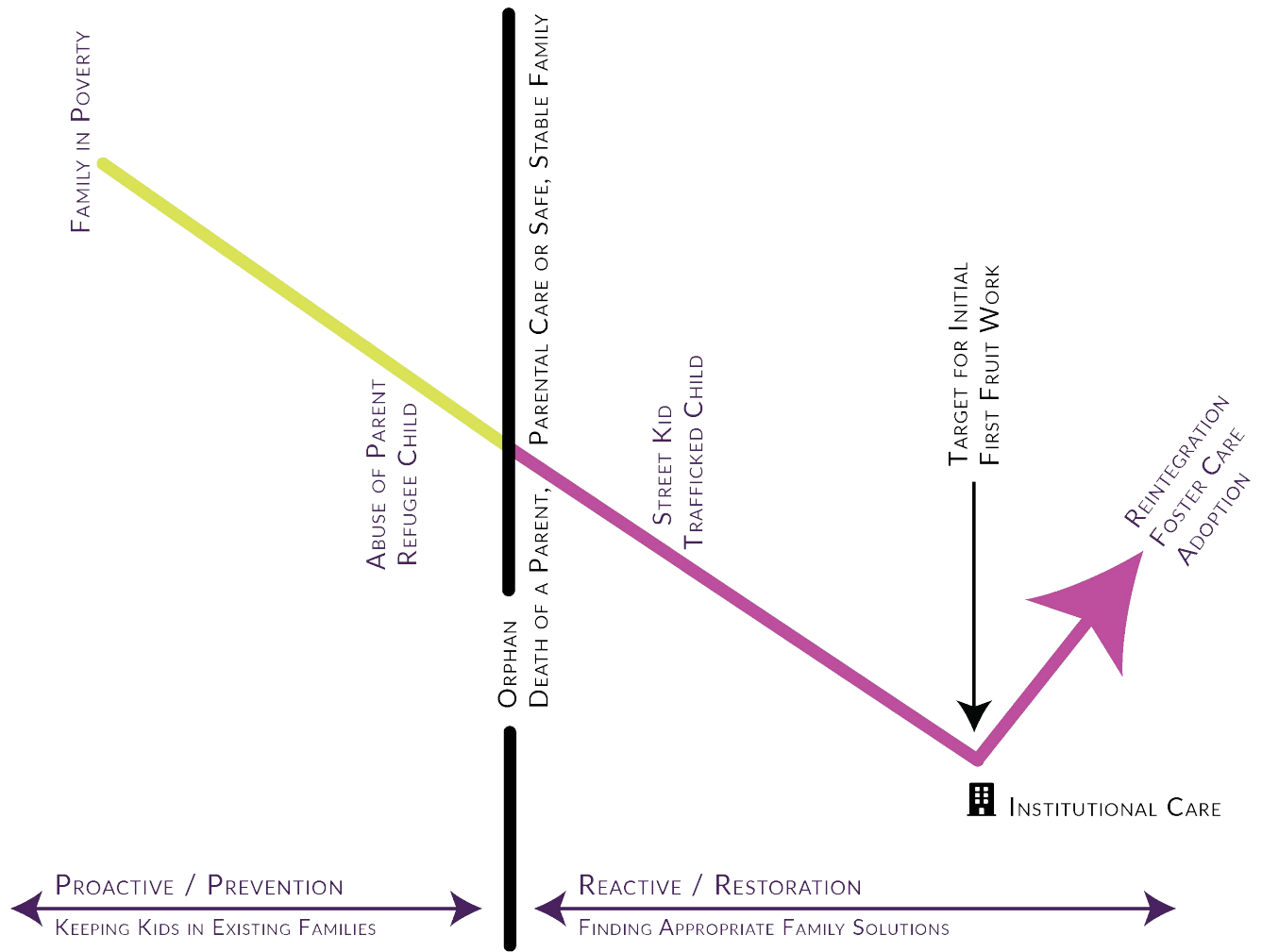
The diagram on the following page, is a visual aid I developed to better understand the issue and where First Fruit might connect to OVC, understanding the role of FBC in a visual way. I have tested this out on co-workers as well as donors and have found it to be a useful tool. Let me give a brief orientation:

General:

- Descending line: represents the decline from a family that provides care to loss of a family. For this example, the line terminates with Institutional care.
- Arrow pointing up: symbolizes redemption of the situation. This arrow can happen at any point along the scale. There can be redemption (services) for street kids, trafficked children or skills training for families (economic development).

Colored Lines:

- Black: This line delineates a transition from potential risks for the child to being an orphan.
- Green: Keeping a child in their family. Proactive work done here. Programs like, prenatal care, educational help, WASH. Examples: LIA, Compassion, Friends of Kardelen and World Orphans
- Pink: the child has lost their family support. Engagement is reactive to their situation with an effort to restore to family. Examples: Care for Children, Casa Viva, ACCIR, East West.



4. Institutional Spectrum of Care: (reaction to the needs of OVC)

Many organizations are recognizing the value in viewing interventions for orphan care as a spectrum. While each response is needed to some extent, we should continually be seeking ways to improve the spectrum of care with the primary goal of reuniting Kids with biological families or if they are truly and orphan to provide other family based options, as a priority. While First Fruit might believe that de-institutionalization is the right end goal, the system cannot change overnight so improvement of the spectrum to ensure best care is integral to the transition.

Spectrum:

Serving Street Kids

Orphanages (large group homes)

Children's Homes (small group homes)

(de-institutionalization or a new system, is the bridge to the following)

Reunification to natural parent(s) (when appropriate)

Extended Family/Kinship

Foster Care

Adoption

5. An emerging response to OVC:

Organization out of the Chaos: With Organizations like Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO) and World Without Orphans (WWO) we are seeing cooperation between organizations and strategies begin to form these strategies to bring about change. WWO is launching an initiative called ACE, Activate, Connect and Equip. The purpose of this is to empower those that are looking to bring change by Activating others to join the change, connecting people together to learn and encourage and finally they are seeking ways to Equip participants in the movement with tools to move forward with change.

Governments responding: It exciting to see that governments are responding. In some cases, they are moving ahead of a plan to transition children in the best possible way and are just forcing institutions to close. It is imperative that the movement engages Governments and encourages greater understanding of the needs of the children in care and best practices for transitioning children. The government in Paraguay is involved with Paraguay without Orphans and together are working on a transition plan for their children, while Cambodia is seeking to close unregistered Orphanages which is the majority.

Church responding: It is apparent that God is stirring the heart of the Church in a new way to respond to the needs of orphans. We are seeing the Church take action in many ways including advocacy, government engagement, a shift from institutional care, donor awareness, family strengthening, and poverty solutions. At the heart of it all, social workers are being trained and children are being reunited with families, placed in foster care, or adopted into new families. This is being done because the Church desires to follow God's instruction to "look after orphans . . . in their distress."

6. Moving forward:

This initiative allows First Fruit to be intentional in coming alongside this movement, to encourage ministries to flourish, in their calling to care for orphans. We will do this in the following two ways:

A. Implementing a Granting modality:

Over the next months as we participate with and test new paradigms I am learning how Advocates, Champions and Practitioners are Activated, Connected and Equipped. I will learn by participating in conferences and gatherings as well as engaging with organizations like WWO and CAFO. Learning will also happen from our granting through direct project feedback. Intentionally engaging with practitioners that are in the process of transitioning will be important and informative.

Relationships like Kids Alive who are entering an S-curve change will be a priority for our learning as well as informing the movement. Looking for ways that FF can strategically gather participants together to facilitate Activation, and Equipping of key participants will also be important.

During this process, we will have to test ideas, pilot projects and help institutions, donors and others through the difficulties of change. The body of Christ is faced with the challenge of caring for these children, providing a lasting and secure environment where they will develop and be successful adults, who know God. There are already agents of change working to provide care and adhere to best practices. I believe the best way to influence this movement is by engaging Advocates, Champions and Practitioners. *Ultimately, as Christians who have experienced adoption into God's family, our ultimate goal is for orphans to know the love of our Heavenly Father and be adopted into His family.*

B. Implementing an Operational Modality:

Our goal is to evaluate current models and, with community and NGO participation define and implement an action plan that has meaning for the communities in which these children are being cared for. This is a complex and, multi dimensional issue. There is not just one solution or place of connection. As we discover where First Fruit should engage we will need to test leanings against real life. I would like to propose that we begin by separating participants into four categories.

1. *Advocates:*

Leaders that have the ability to speak to their constituents or have influence to a broad group of people. This can happen in the following ways:

- a. Institutional best practices and understanding of their role.
 - i. Examples: Australian Christian Churches International (ACCI), Faith to Action (F2A)
- b. Thought-partners and conveners who are using research or platforms to change the response of well-meaning Christians who are propagating the orphanage model.
 - i. Examples: F2A, WWO, CAFO, Ghana without Orphans
- c. Excellent ministries that are working with governments to provide family-based solutions.
 - i. Examples: Care for Children, Bethany Christian Services, Casa Viva, Paraguay without Orphans

2. *Champions:*

Those that are working with Advocates to provide system change information as well as engaging Practitioners in making sustainable and lasting changes to caring for children. This might be the most important category as we learn what will works and what is transferable between projects and nations. It will be imperative that we share this information within the movement.

- a. Progression of Care: Highlighting and strengthening good models showing how to move along the continuum from institutional to family-based care.
 - i. Examples: Children in Families, Care for Children, ACCIR, Casa Viva. (These are organizations that have deep understanding of the challenged of a practitioner and are able to provide solutions to bring change.)
- b. Changing Western donor mindsets: This is happening as you understand who is funding the projects and where the ownership is held.
 - i. Example: ACCI, Casa Viva

3. *Practitioners:* Workers that have direct connection to how children are cared for in institutions (there are two sides to this, Preventative: keeping kids in their existing families and Restorative: restoring kids to family)

- a. *De-institutionalization:* We are seeking to engage practitioners that are seeking to change how they care for Orphans.
 - i. Example: KAI, East West, Kardelen Mercy Teams

4. *Changing Western Donor Mindset:*

Funding is what is driving the majority of the OVC programs that we are seeking to change. While the above three areas address the need for change, as it pertains to OVC care, First Fruit is playing a role in changing mindsets and practice.

- *Western donor definition:* 1. Funders (from the West) who provide at a minimum monthly child support and 2. Those that provide seed and ongoing funding for institutional care for children "Orphanages"