

Orphans & Vulnerable Children: Institutional Care

Pipeline, Eco-System and Power flow:

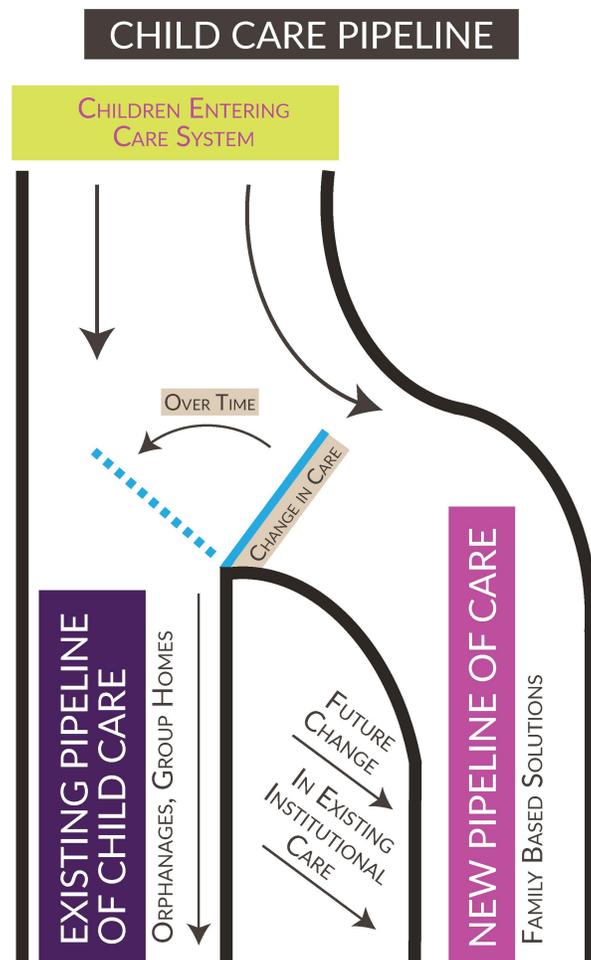
Understanding the pressures on the system of Orphan Care and how to bring change. Discoveries from my trip to Costa Rica to spend time with Phil and Jill Aspergren with CASA Viva.

Child Care Pipeline:

Understanding the current pipeline and what we are working to achieve is important. The below illustration is one way to impact the care (flow) of children. There are three parts to the diagram. 1. The top is where children enter into the system. For now, let's say that system is Institutional Care 2. LEFT: this is the current system of caring for Orphans and Vulnerable Children. For good or for bad this is what society has accepted as acceptable care 3. RIGHT: This represents new Ideas / appropriate care for children. 4. MIDDLE: There is a blue director, controlling which pipe children flow to. The hope would be that this director adjusts directing children to pipe 2, more appropriate care of children without parental care and based on family.

Example: Casa Viva Costa Rica

1. Government: very engaged and is aware of 3000 children in either their care or NGO children's homes
2. Government: has a social services system set up that removes children from abusive situations, drug addicted families etc. We do not know how many are in the system as a result of double orphan status
3. Government: Current process is that children are removed from harmful family and placed in a children's home until 18. Very little is done to restore to family.
3. Casa Viva created a new system that receives the child and immediately places them into a family. These families are typically recruited through the local church. The child is then, if possible, reintegrated with their parent(s) or remain in their foster family. If the biological parent's rights are removed then CV looks to place the child permanently through adoption.

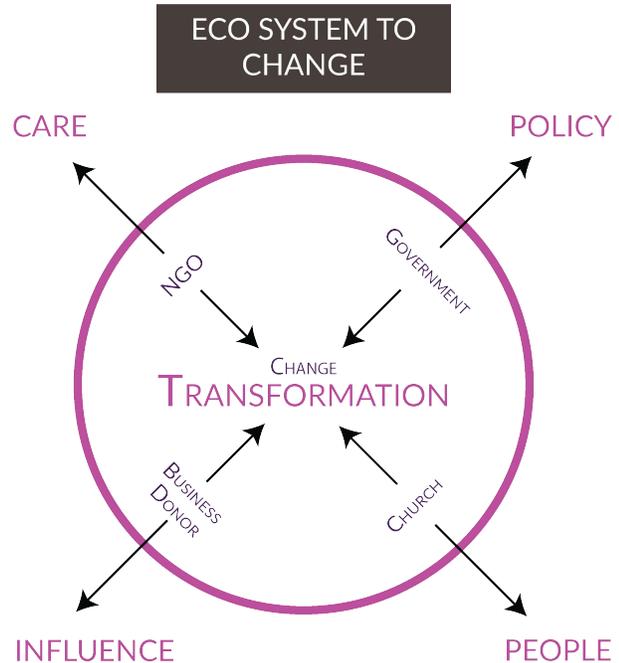


4. CASA Viva: Currently receive 125 children through this program with many being reintegrated to biological parents. They are not seeking to bring change to the current system other than discussions with the government about better ways to care for children.

Casa Viva created a parallel system to the government system. Their goal was to create a new solution not change what is existing. Their hope is that over time the Government will recognize the effectiveness of immediately placing children into family that they will seek to change their current system.

Eco System:

It is important to understand major voices / influencers, as we are working to bring change. As you can see in the diagram the ultimate foal at the center of the circle is change. Within the circle are the major change agents: government, Church, Donors and NGOs. The red arrows and words represent the key activity of each change agent. Perhaps we can call this their unique contribution. The blue areas represent when the change agents are working together which leads to *transformation*. Note: the diagram was kept simple on purpose and is not meant to cover all the variations but is meant to give broad understanding to the ecosystem of change.



Casa Viva built their system on this model. The NGO provided a new way of caring for children that had been removed from their biological families. The government recognizes the work of the NGO bringing over 125 children to Casa Viva each year. Families are volunteering from the local CHURCH whom Casa Viva has engaged. The project is 94%+ funded locally primarily through the government.

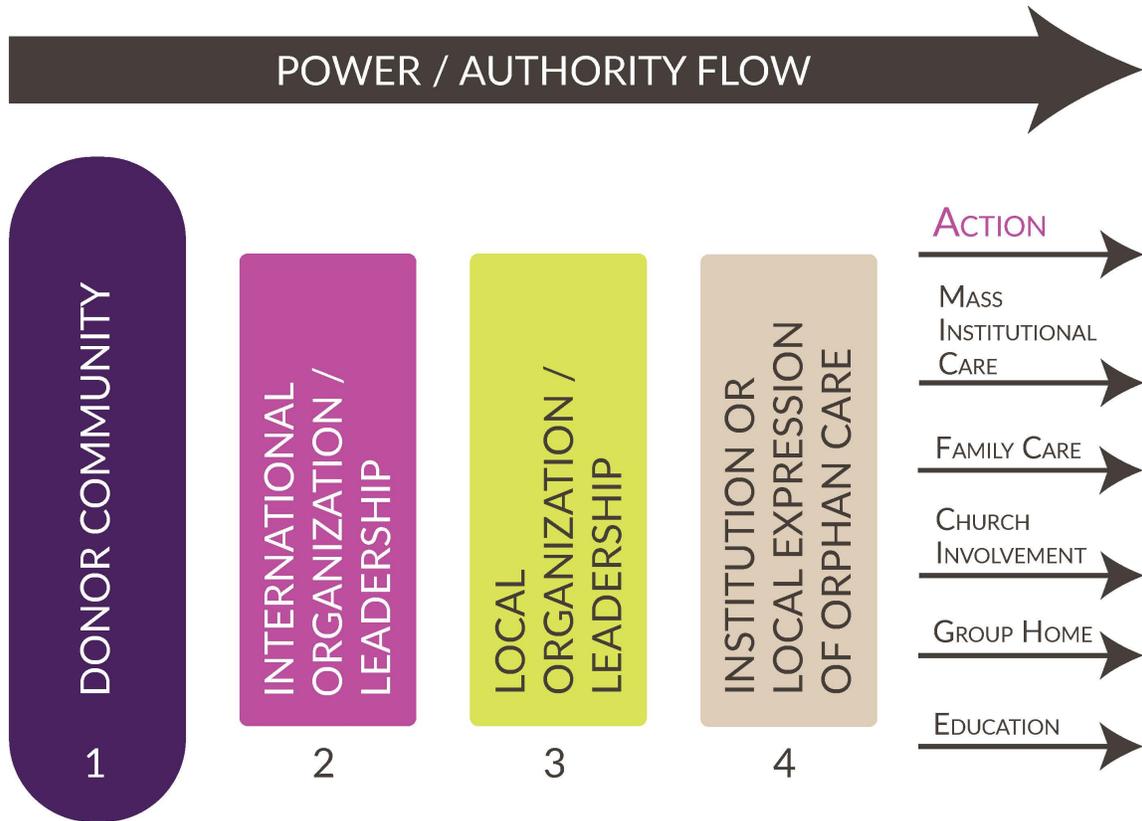
POWER FLOW:

Understanding the Power / Authority structure of an Orphanage (Institution)

This diagram revealed the authority structure of an Institution or NGO highlighting the barriers to change. In this example, the diagram has two parts. The red and green represent the international element with the blue and black representing the local element. This highlights quickly some challenges:

- Difficult to change approach due to donor’s investments (built an orphanage...)
- Western driven not locally informed
- Change by the local org needs permission from the international org

Interestingly this simple diagram also highlights who needs to be targeted to bring change. Let me connect the diagram to a real story from Casa Viva.



Story: Wanta Nene, Guatemala

Phil has been working with the local orphanage working through best practice as well as transitioning from a residential home to a transitional home. This would mean kids are reunited with biological family when possible or move into foster homes. The local leadership and workers understood and wanted to make this change. When they approached their International board / patron they were given permission to proceed! They could proceed if they were able to fill the empty beds with new kids. There was a disconnect! The international leadership did not fully understand the need for change or was concerned with expectations. The hurdle for change starts with getting the international leadership in alignment with appropriate care. Many don't agree and believe "We are providing a good standard of living for these children, We are giving them a solid Christian foundation and with Education they will become change agents in the community." Ultimately the hesitation / fear of change for the organization is losing the Donors participation.

NOTE: These diagrams are meant to guide us as we engage a very complex and broken system of caring for Orphans and Vulnerable children by providing permanent families.