PREVENTING SEPARATION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF STREET YOUTH IN MACHAKOS COUNTY

Objective and relevance (the world around us)

Street children in the Machakos County in Kenya are pushed onto the streets by desperation and a self-belief that they have nowhere else to go. A growing amount of these street children end up spending their lives in institutions - that has shown to have negative effects on the children’s well-being, rights and opportunities in the future. Among the street children being institutionalized a lot end up in ‘correctional’ facilities, children’s homes, etc. without contact to their family and community. Positive Life Kenya (PLK) has been working with this group of children in the Machakos for the past eight years, including activities focused at rehabilitation, family tracking, and especially providing basic services such as food, cloth and access to education for the most vulnerable children. However, Positive Life Kenya has discovered that the strategy of delivering services is not sustainable in the long run nor does it address the root causes of why street children end up on the streets and in institutions.

In Machakos County, most children living on the streets are predominantly there as a result of poverty and poverty-related issues that includes violence, abuse, neglect and abandonment by their families. A study done by UNICEF showed that over 76% of children in Kenya had experienced a form of violence, be it sexual, physical or emotional. Another crucial reason for children leaving their family and community is the stigmatization and discrimination connected to HIV/AIDS – either if one or both of the parents are infected or of the child itself is infected. A key reason connected to this stigma are harmful cultural practices such as genital cutting and early marriage. This forces, especially young girls, to leave their families to protect themselves. All of these above-mentioned reasons push children onto the streets and potentially into institutions that can provide them with the essentials that they need to survive. Although, at the surface this looks like a better option, many studies have shown the harmful effects on children growing up at institutions and a movement towards family-based care has been seen in Africa (For example in Rwanda) the past years.

In this pilot project, Positive Life Kenya (PLK) and 100% for the Children (100%) wishes to try out new strategic ways of addressing the problem with children moving to the streets and into institutions – particularly in the Machakos county. Therefore, the overall objective with this pilot project is to strengthen the capacity of PLK to be able to plan and carry out sustainable activities addressing the root causes of why children leave their families to move to the street. The empirical experience and generated knowledge collected through testing these new strategic approaches will be used in a co-creation process with other like-minded NGO’s, in order to enable them to act united on this matter and, with time, to advocate and affect policy makers in Kenya to address the problem differently than today, where Kenya relies a lot on institutionalization.

To reach the overall objective PLK and 100% wish to work with the following immediate objectives in a 15-months long pilot project:

1. Capacity build Positive Life Kenya through a workshop focused on new and best practice within the field of street children and de-institutionalization
2. Try out a new approach in the local communities in Machakos County, where the root-causes of children moving to the streets and into institutions will be addressed through a sustainable strategy instead of service delivery
3. Be a part of a co-creation process with like-minded NGO’s interested in street children and de-institutionalization to discuss the experiences arriving from this project, best practices in the field

and other NGO’s knowledge and experiences. The aim is to lay the ground for common future advocacy efforts targeting policy makers in Kenya

**Machakos County**

Machakos County is a heavily challenged urban slum area on the outside of Nairobi, Kenya. It has a total population of 1,098,584 people. The population of the county is young, with approx. 40 % of the population being below age 15. The average number of children per woman is 3.9 in the county. The county HIV prevalence is 5%. Within Machakos County this pilot will especially work in the area called Mlolongo. Mlolongo town is located along the busy Mombasa highway – 19 Kilometers from the Capital city of Nairobi. The town is the main stop over for long distance trucks transporting goods and cargo from the port of Mombasa to the greater East Africa countries e.g. Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Rwanda and DRC Congo. Poverty rates in Mlolongo are approx. 61% and continue to be aggravated by pressure on land due to the high population of in-migrants, who come to look for work. Most of the inhabitants in the area are unemployed and those that manage to find work generally earn less than US $2-3 a day selling fruits and vegetables or working as casual unskilled laborers. In the absence of viable income activities, theft, child prostitution, illiteracy and diseases fuel the cycle of poverty. The high demand for sex from the truck drivers facilitate a fast track for young teenage girls into commercial sex work to supplement their family’s income.

**Street children in Kenya**

In Machakos County of Kenya, Street children are the casualties of poverty and poor relations at home. This includes parental physical abuse, alcohol, violence and mental abuse of the children. As such every street child has a reason for being on the streets. While some are lured by the promise of excitement and freedom, the majority are pushed onto the street by desperation and a realization that there is no other choice. Street children are often named after their main survival activities. For example, vendors (Cokoraa), street gangs (Makauzi) and juvenile prostitutes (Poko). What is obvious is that street children are poverty-stricken, and their needs and problems are a result of wanting to meet basic needs for survival,

The majority of street children in Nairobi is boys. This can be explained by the fact, that it is only in recent years that girls are seen on the streets. Therefore, the number of street girls are still low relative to boys. Research indicates that the majority of street children parents are single. The parents have irregular incomes and is for the most part self-employed, with the majority of them relying on illicit trade, petty businesses and prostitution. Street children face serious risks by living on the streets, including risks that affects their normal growth and cognitive development. Being away from their families they lack the normal stability, supervision and emotional protection that exits in the family structure. They are therefore exposed to exploitation, criminal activities, substance abuse, violence and stigmatization.

**Institutionalization of street children**

Institutionalizationof street children is a thriving phenomenon in Africa, Kenya being highly affected. Although legislative and regulatory measures aimed at child protection have been in place for a number of years now, and the national government appears to be standing by its commitment, as expressed in recent times, to implement a care reform which encompasses de-institutionalization, the national child protection system remains very dependent on institutional care. The Kenyan Children’s Services Department spend roughly two-thirds of their entire budget on institutions, such as approved schools and remand homes. This leaves little manpower and resources for community social work and the development of other alternatives to these institutional facilities.

Institutionalization of street children in Kenya is commonly seen as a lesser evil compared to having children growing up on the streets. However, institutional care has shown to be not only harmful, but also dismissive in its approach to the fundamental reasons of why children end up in the streets in the first place. Evidence from social and medical science has shown the negative impact institutional care has on children’s physical, emotional and social development. The root-causes of children choosing the streets over their families are, as indicated in the above sections, poverty-related and related to poor relations within the families including violence and abuse. By applying institutionalization of street children, as the main response, poverty and poor family relations are not addressed - and children end up being reliant on support from institutions without a social support system. Faith-based private residential care institutions are increasingly assuring institutionalization of children at risk or without parental care. These residential care institutions are commonly run by national and international NGO’s and/or by individuals.

It is hard to get an exact understanding of the size of the problem – institutionalized street children – in Kenya, since data collection on this group is weak. While a common database termed the ‘Child Protection Information Management System’ exists in Kenya since May 2017, it has not reached all of the country’s counties. By the end of 2017 only 15 counties had been reached, with a plan to roll out the system in the remaining 32 by the end of 2018 (UNICEF). The system present in Machakos County has no supportive interventions to enable the government social workers to obtain the data on this target group.

**Best practice experiences with deinstitutionalization approaches from countries in Africa**

In this pilot project we wish to build on the experiences gained from the approach used in other African countries to select and try out strategies to prevent family separation and institutionalization of children in the specific context in Machakos County. Building on best practices already tested in an African context hopefully will create a strong foundation for this pilot. Below are some of the programs and reports that have inspired the strategy for this pilot.

*Uganda: The Deinstitutionalization of Orphans and other Vulnerable Children in Uganda*was a project funded by USAID that lasted for 42 months. The aim of the project was to improve the safety, well-being and development of highly vulnerable children, particularly those living without adequate family care across 12 districts. The main activities in the project was interventions to create opportunities for existing institutions to re-conceptualize their role and skills to implement alternative care, prioritizing family-based care for all children, strengthen informal child protection mechanisms, and mobilize communities to monitor children’s wellbeing and strengthen household economy and parenting skills. The project worked with community leaders and faith-based organizations.

The evolution of the project showed that the involvement of community mechanisms and para-social workers worked well and ensured sustainability. Especially training on parenting skills were singled out as a very useful activity to reach the project aim. Collaboration with government showed to be crucial in the long run.

*Rwanda: TMM – Let’s Raise Children in Families* was a programme implemented in Rwanda to ensure that all children living in institutional care in Rwanda are reunited with their families or placed in suitable forms of family-based care and to prevent further institutionalization. The key activities of the project included: strengthening authorities and developing national standards and guidance on children’s care, training a stronger social workforce and absorbing these professionals into the civil service, supporting families of reintegrated children, preventing further institutionalization, enable community volunteers to monitor vulnerable children and families, transform residential care facilities and developing case management and M&E systems. Especially the parts of preventing further institutionalization and enabling community volunteers are interesting for this pilot project.

The community volunteers trained in the program were responsible for monitoring vulnerable children and families, to help prevent unnecessary separation and reintegrate children into family care. They carried out household visits, did check-ups on child wellbeing and helped link families to services and support. The evaluation of the program found that this kind of activities had the ability to change attitudes towards care, monitor and support vulnerable children and their families and engage other civil actors on the communities. The prevention of further institutionalization included supporting parents and wider families, creation of group-work designed to exchange knowledge and experience around child protection and care and counselling for vulnerable parents such as teenage parents. One of the key lessons learnt was that it is vital to understand local contexts and respond to factors such as attitudes towards teenage pregnancy, which may push children into institutional care.

In the overall evaluation of the two programs, it was found that both sustainability and efficiency was enhanced by community mobilization and that the collaboration with local leaders, churches, etc. help to ensure reductions in institutionalization in the long term. This is inspiring for this pilot project, where we will focus on active engagement of local communities, families and children and strengthen the co-creation between selected NGO´s in the Machakos county.

**Covid-19 impact on this pilot project**

Covid-19 continues to spread all across Kenya and of course we need to take into consideration how covid-19 will affect this pilot project.

For the activities in Machakos County none of the partners see any reason why they would not be able to be carried out. PLK has been active in the communities during the whole period conducting outreach activities - and still following the regulations put in place by the government. Also, on November 16th 2020 PLK shared a document released by the Kenyan government stating that the schools in Kenya will reopen in January 2021. This gives a strong indication that Kenya is on its way back to a normal state.

Regarding the training workshop in Kenya and especially the monitoring visit by 100% staff, we do not think that covid-19 will affect the activities mentioned, to a degree, that makes it impossible to carry them out. For the capacity training, 100% staff, is not the facilitating lead. SOS Children’s Villages Kenya is. Thus the workshop will be carried out with co -facilitation by 100% either physical or online. The time span for this project being 15 months from January 2021 places the monitoring visit no earlier than July 2021 and by then we expect to be able to travel to Kenya.

The partnership/collaborators (our starting point)

The two partners working together in this pilot are Positive Life Kenya and 100% for the Children.

*100% for the Children (100%)* was established in Denmark in 2008 to work towards improving the living

conditions and strengthening the rights of the most vulnerable children and children in Kenya and Ghana.

100% does not only work with providing access to basic services like health and education, but increasingly

to give children influence in decision-making processes through advocacy and capacity building. 100% has moved from a focus solely on children in difficult circumstances to a strengthened youth

perspective, with a focus on empowering young people from marginalized areas to actively shape their

societies through children leadership, capacity building, campaigning, and advocacy work, peer-to-peer

efforts, etc. 100% is also actively engaged in SDG work, aligning all its projects to relevant SDGs, and

working with partners to strengthen this focus.

For the last two years, 100% have worked with children-inclusive SRHR and GBV- services in Kenya with the

aim of building strong active citizenships based on critical independent thinking among children and children

through inclusive SRHR (Sexual reproductive Health and Rights) services enabling them to claim their rights.

100% is currently a partner in a Danish capacity-building project together with SOS children’s villages, Fairstart Foundation, Læger uden grænser, DMRU and more. The project is focused on de-institutionalization with the aim of strengthening the capacity, knowledge sharing and cooperation among primarily Danish CSOs, who work with vulnerable children and young people, who have lost or are at risk of losing parental care. This is done through a series of seminars which focus on various issues that shed light on the causes of care failure, intersectionality and different experiences within the placement area (quality alternative care). The course is linked to significant priorities in the World 2030 - and not least the world goals and relates specifically to the UN Resolution from 2019 with a special focus on children without parental care. The objective is to ensure that Danish CSOs and South partners, who primarily or secondarily work with neglected and placed children know about the UN resolution 2019, so that they can contribute to more data about these children, that they have knowledge of and tools for working for alternatives to institutionalization. The experiences from this capacity-building project that 100% will inform this pilot project. PLK will also be able to participate in the seminars held during the capacity-building project online and share the experiences from this pilot project with the participating NGO’s and stakeholders.

*Positive Life Kenya (PLK)*’s offices are Located in Machakos County, Mlolongo town. Project activities and

service delivery is fused in the 7 forgotten slums of Mlolongo. They are huge slums with a population of

over 3 million people. PLK will be the Kenyan partner overseeing the intervention implementation and

overall financial management in Kenya. PLK will facilitate all the activities in the urban slum environment of

Mlolongo, Nairobi.  PLK will be reporting both narrative and financially to 100% on a quarterly basis.

Initially called Living Positive Mlolongo, the organization began as a Community Based Organization (CBO)

in 2010. Since 2010, the organization has expanded its support services to many slums of the Machakos.

This organization was renamed to Positive Life Kenya in 2015. Today Positive Life Kenya works with a long

variety of empowering and sustaining efforts. The organization creates awareness, works with skill-based

programs for children and women, supports the local community through communication and advocacy

about the prevention of HIV. PLK’s vision is to see families living with dignity and free of poverty. Their

mission is to break the cycle of poverty by educating and empowering marginalized families to build

healthy environments for their children to thrive and create lasting change.

PLK has a robust structured intervention that caters for 68 Street Children (44 boys and 28 girls) in a drop-in center. Here the street children are offered health care and basic needs provision and psycho-social support. The project also has two schools where the children are catered for academically. The activities being carried out by PLK also involves harm reduction (counselling for the children taking drugs). PLK further has 2 rehabilitation systems that ensure that the children are supported at community level through their distant relatives, foster families, relatives, parents, caregivers or well-wishers. Mary Wabwire, the director of PLK, has over seven years of experience working in charitable children institutions before she started Positive Life Kenya. She realized that working with street and vulnerable children in children’s homes didn’t address the root causes of the problem. She therefore decided to work with supporting vulnerable families and children at community level instead. Starting this project therefore has a huge importance for PLK, as it is part of their DNA. When the project idea was discussed between the partners both Mary and several team members expressed a wish to work even deeper with root causes to build a sustainable strategy to address some of the big challenges, they see each day in the slum areas of Machakos County.

Their hope is, that this pilot will be able to inform a direction for their work in the future building on more sustainable strategies instead of relying on service delivery.

Besides PLK and 100%, the following NGO will be involved in the capacity building and co-creation activities in this pilot-project.

*SOS Children’s Villages Kenya* is supporting children within their community and in their family environment. Apart from giving children a new home in their villages, SOS Family Strengthening Programme enable children, who are at the brink of losing family care to grow up in caring family environment. In 2019 UN published a resolution focusing on children without or at risk of losing parental care. SOS Children’s Villages contributed to this through several of their analyses and reports. SOS Kenya are strong advocates for protecting children without parental care by setting the child first and foremost. Even though SOS Children’s Villages is an important player in regard to building homes for children without parental care, they are also at the forefront of finding more sustainable solutions to the factors driving children away from their families and communities. SOS Children’s Villages is the lead partner on the capacity-building project here in Denmark (described under 100%) and have a strong network of national and international scientists, NGO’s and actors working to protect children against unnecessary institutionalization.

SOS Children’s Villages Kenya will be responsible for facilitating the capacity-building workshop for PLK sharing their experiences with the Family Strengthening Program. SOS Children’s Villages Kenya will also take part in the co-creation process with PLK and other NGO’s to share and develop new approaches on de-institutionalization and advocacy – particularly for Machakos county. As such, a strong synergy is anticipated between the capacity-building project in Denmark and this pilot project.

Target groups, objectives, and expected results (our intervention)

Target groups and duty bearers

Positive Life Kenya will be one of the primary target groups in this pilot project since the capacity-building of them lies at the centre of the intervention. PLK has great experience in working with vulnerable groups in Machakos County - and are already conducting a lot of different activities. However, the wish to move from a more service-centred approach with regard to street children and institutionalization to a more strategic level guides the capacity-building and the activities in this pilot. This pilot will capacity build a total of 11 staff members in PLK including the director of PLK Mary Wabwire, project manager David Kimotho and peer to peer mentors/social workers (former street children) working within PLK.

Vulnerable families and street children at risk of separation and/or institutionalization in Machakos County targeted through outreach and support activities; 50 street children who have been unnecessarily separated from their parents and who are now residing on the street or in childcare homes and 75 vulnerable families in risk of losing their children to institutional care. The families and street children all live within the slums of Mlolongo in Machakos County.

Like-minded NGO’s working in the area of catering for vulnerable (street) children and families in Nairobi either through community- or family-based activities or in children’s homes. Besides Positive Life Kenya, the NGO’s being included in this project will most likely be Ray of Hope/Children of hope, SOS Children’s Villages Kenya, Beyond the Orphanage and Heritage of Faith Children’s’ Home. Between them, they reach out to more than 10,000 families and children.

Secondary target group /duty bearers

As a part of the co-creation process authorities like The Children Office, Juvenile Court and Social Development Office in Machakos County will be invited in for the last meeting between the NGO’s to share the knowledge and position paper being developed in this pilot project. This to keep the relevant authorities informed about the process and create opportunities to involve and affect them in future advocacy efforts. Building a relationship to the duty bearers already is important for the future opportunities to collaborate and affect their opinions and actions. As mentioned in the section about experiences from other African countries, it is crucial to involve government and other authorities to create sustainable and long-term change. However, this requires long-lasting and persistent efforts. The ground will be laid in this pilot for closer collaboration and advocacy efforts towards duty bearers in future interventions.

Strategy of the intervention: activities, outputs and sustainability

1. Capacity-build Positive Life Kenya through a workshop focused on new and best practices within the field of street children and de-institutionalization

For the time being PLK has been carrying out service delivery as the primary activity in the work with street children and their families in the communities. PLK has expressed a desire for building a strategy within the organization that is less focused on service delivery and more focused on strategic ways of preventing children from moving to the streets and into institutionalization. PLK will therefore be involved in the following capacity-building activities:

* 1. Capacity-building workshop

9 selected staff from PLK, including the director of PLK will take part in a workshop focused on the phenomenon ‘street children/children’ accessing knowledge on the root-causes of why children chose to leave their parents and communities and move onto the streets. Further the workshop will address institutionalization and especially how other countries and/or organizations within Kenya has succeeded.

with de-institutionalization on a local level. The outcome for this workshop will not only be to capacity-build the selected staff at PLK, but also to create a united knowledgebase that will focus more on sustainable strategies in the work with street children within the organization.

The capacity building workshop will be facilitated by SOS Children’s Villages Kenya. One of the workshop days a psychologist will also be invited to share insights on psycho-social aspects of street life, malfunctional families and institutionalization. Mary Wabwire, the director of PLK, will also share her experience with charitable children institutions having more than seven years of experience on this area. Camilla Legendre from 100% will present the results from the Danish capacity-building project and link them to the context of the Machakos.

* 1. Creating the capacity to collect data and systematize experiences gained through this project

2 selected staff from PLK will be trained in how to conduct a survey to be able to create an overview of how other NGO’s has worked with street children and/or de-institutionalization.

rom this pilot project during the project period to be shared with like-minded NGO’s in the co-creation phase (and as ground for advocacy work in the future). The result of this training will be a survey giving an overview of alternatives to institutionalization that PLK and other like-minded NGO’s will be able to use to orient themselves when changing strategic focus. Besides that, a product will also be a mini study describing the approach used in this pilot to address the problems with street children and alternatives to institutionalization. The collection of data in this activity will require some moving around I the Machakos county, which is why the purchase of a motorbike has been put in budget line 2.1. in the project budget.

Albert Obbuyi from the Centre for the Study of Adolescence (CSA) will conduct the training in scientific methods, standards and tools. CSA creates evidence and develop position papers in adolescence and children health issues within local environments and are therefore capable of conducting the training. Both 100% and PLK have been working with Albert in previous projects where he has been responsible for training, data collection and evaluation.

Expected outcomes on objective 1

Not only will a strong group of staff within PLK have knowledge on psycho-social aspects of street life, root-causes of street children moving to the streets, best practices gained from other NGO’s within Kenya on de-institutionalization that will help them guide the work of PLK in a more sustainable direction, PLK will also be able to harvest, analyze and present their own data. The results from this will be a survey outlining the knowledge and best practices on the area right now and a mini study describing the approach being used in this pilot. In this way the experiences collected in this pilot will be easy to systemize and share within the organization.

1. Try out a new approach in the local communities in Machakos County, where the root-causes of children moving to the streets and into institutions will be addressed through a sustainable strategy instead of service delivery

The movement to de-institutionalize children has been going on for a long period of time and African countries such as Uganda, Rwanda and others has been moving towards family-based care. Rwanda has pledged to be the first nation in Africa to be orphanage-free by 2022 and the country has already closed hundreds of institutions. Building on the experiences gained from the approach used in Rwanda (Let’s Raise Children in Families) and other countries this pilot wishes to try out selected strategies to prevent family separation and institutionalization of children in the specific context Machakos County. The approach will combine experiences from other countries with local knowledge of the root cases behind why children leave their parents.

* 1. Family meetings and village leaders

Social workers from PLK will conduct family meetings with the 75 most vulnerable families from 8 villages in Machakos County to talk with parents about child protection, health and nutrition, early childhood development and in general to give families advise and support and connect them to services where necessary. PLK already have a staff consisting of trained social workers capable of carrying out these family meetings. The family meetings will also help PLK map out the most vulnerable children and families in the villages to be able to use that knowledge in the co-creation process later.

Besides the 75 families, village leaders, religious leaders and respected elders from 8 villages will be sensitized on protection of children’s rights during 10 community meetings. The village leaders will be involved in the activities taking place and the positive effects of keeping children together with their families. The village leaders will also be informed of the harmful effects that institutionalization have on children. Involvement of village leaders will help support the community engagement.

* 1. Family support groups

PLK will start up parents’ groups in the local villages whereby parents can come together to discuss family life, child development, how to protect their children against harmful cultural practices and related topics important for the parents. Since studies show that many parents to children moving to the streets in Machakos are single parents, the groups will also function as a support system for single parents where they can ask for advice and get help. The parent’ groups will be set up to function, as small community-based organizations that can take up family issues and violation of children’s rights. The parent’s groups will also become capable of addressing harmful perceptions in the communities – discrimination of children living with HIV/AIDS (either themselves or their parents), gender equality, teenage parents, etc.

Selected staff from PLK will help the communities start up the family support groups in 8 villages targeting 75 vulnerable families. PLK staff will be responsible for helping the family support groups set up standards for the groups: frequency of meetings, meeting agendas for the year, rules of conduct, etc. In the end PLK staff will also help the family support groups build a model for continuation of groups after the pilot intervention period has ended.

* 1. Peer-to-Peer street education on SRHR (Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights) and data harvesting targeting the children

Since one of the root-causes that children leave their home is harmful cultural practices, such as female genital cutting and early marriage this project will focus on providing SRHR-information to children and children in the Machakos. By giving them information about their rights, so that they with time will be able to stand up for themselves - and advocate against abuse, FGC and early marriages. PLK and 100% has been working with children-inclusive SRHR-services for the past 2 years and PLK will therefore be responsible for conducting SRHR-outreach activities. PLK staff are well trained in children-inclusive methodologies and will while this pilot project runs also be working at selected schools in the area together with school management and teachers. The SRHR activity in this pilot will therefore underpin the work being done already. The outreach SRHR activities will be carried out by former street children now working for PLK, as peer to peer mentors/ social workers. Besides sharing information on SRHR the peer to peer mentors/ social workers will also collect data about the street children they meet; why they moved to the street, family relations, etc. The data harvesting will be guided by the two staff within PLK trained in this, implemented by the peer to peer mentors/ social workers and analyzed further in the mini study conducted by PLK staff.

**Expected outcomes on objective 2**

The most important outcome for this objective will be a thoroughly tested approach to target the root causes of children moving to the streets and into institutionalization specific to Machakos County. This approach will build on prevention and outreach activities instead of service delivery and hence lay the ground for more sustainable efforts. The approach will be documented in a mini study written by PLK staff.

1. Be a part of a co-creation process with like-minded NGO’s interested in street-connected children and de-institutionalization to discuss the experiences arriving from this project, best practices in the field and the other NGO’s knowledge and experience laying the ground for common advocacy efforts in the future targeting policy makers in Kenya

Co-creation is about creating new initiatives, approaches or products in community between different NGO’s, stakeholders, companies, professional groups, etc. The aim is to qualify the product - in this case the approach being used to address the problem with street children and institutionalization - and to assure a high quality in the product. For this pilot project the co-creation process will bring in different kind of NGO’s – both working with institutionalization or against it – to share different perspectives and develop joined actions and approaches to be tried out in Kenya. The hope is that this co-creation will lay the ground for future collaboration and a joined effort to affect authorities through advocacy activities in the future.

The co-creation process will involve 5 NGO’s working on the area of vulnerable children and families and/or institutionalization: Positive Life Kenya, Ray of Hope/Children of Hope, SOS Children’s Villages Kenya, Beyond the orphanage and Heritage of Faith Children’s’ Home. The five organizations will meet 6 times during the intervention period. The five organizations will take turn to be the host of the meeting. The host will be responsible for preparing an introduction to their way of working with vulnerable children/families and (de)institutionalization leaving room for discussion in the end so that the organizations together can create new strategies. 2 participants from each organization will participate in the meetings. During the intervention period, 2 people from the group will be selected to be responsible for gathering and presenting the reflections and suggestions being discussed during the meetings in a ‘position paper’. The participating NGO’s will also together map relevant authorities and stakeholders invite in and target in future interventions. For the last meeting government authorities and other relevant stakeholders will be invited to the meeting for a presentation of the position paper. This last meeting will create the ground for future collaboration and advocacy efforts.

Expected outcomes on objective 3

Besides the learning and co-creation process itself the outcome for this activity will be a position paper describing the thoughts, practices and guidelines developed during the process and further a map of authorities and stakeholders relevant to this case. Both the position paper and the mapping will guide the subsequent efforts to get authorities in Kenya to change practice from relying on institutional care to focusing on family-based care and prevention work.

Systematizing experiences

Since the activities in this pilot project involves capacity building of PLK staff to harvest, analyse and present data, a co-creation phase where experiences and future actions will be discussed and a process in Denmark focusing on building capacity to work with de-institutionalization the experiences gained from this pilot will be easy to systemize. The staff at PLK will not only be able harvest and analyse data but also to present them in a manner, where they can guide future practices within the organization building up a mini study describing best practices, challenges and future actions. Further, this knowledge will be shared within a network of like-minded NGO’s in a co-creation process where some of the outputs will be a position paper and a mapping of stakeholders - guiding the way for future collaboration and advocacy efforts. These learning processes in Kenya will inform and be informed by the capacity building project in Denmark laying the ground for systematization of experiences not only within 100% and PLK but also between other NGO’s and stakeholders in both Denmark and Kenya.

Intervention-related information work in Denmark

Institutionalization isn’t just a problem in Africa. It is something we contribute to even here in Denmark by sending out interns and volunteers to work at children’s homes or institutions in Africa. In the information work we will focus on sheeting lights on these problematic structures and showcasing alternatives to separation. The capacity building project under Globalt Fokus will create a platform to share some of this information and besides that we will also use our own social media, newsletters and webpage to inform the Danish citizens about the root causes, alternative approaches, UN resolution and sustainability in de-institutionalization projects.