

# Sierra Leone's Coalition for family Care



In January of this year, the Sierra Leone Coalition for Family Care began organizing. The coalition is comprised of four well-respected Sierra Leonean organizations who are known leaders in care reform for vulnerable children. Their combined expertise in child protection and child welfare is formidable. They are using their collective power to amplify educational efforts throughout Sierra Leone on conditions and practices pertaining to family separation. The organizational participants have complementary backgrounds in trauma-informed social work, case management, family strengthening curriculum, and transition support services for orphanages seeking to transition to family care. They are all well acquainted with best practices in prevention of child trafficking, accurate family tracing and safe reintegration of children into families. The four organizations are Child Reintegration Centre (Bo), Child and Family Permanency Services (Wellington), Princess Promise (Bo and Waterloo), and World Hope International (Freetown).

The Coalition's vision for the future is that all children in Sierra Leone are cared for in families. This would include an increase in support for family care options for children, in support for residential care organizations such as orphanages seeking to transition their mode, the development of national policies promoting care reform that prioritizes family care. It is the goal of the Coalition that there be a bridge between it and the government to allow for collaboration for the good of all children in the country.

The SL Coalition for Family Care brings a great deal of collective strength to this work. All four organizations have strong, positive

working relationships with government ministries. All have highly qualified, hardworking and dedicated staff known for their integrity and commitment, and dedicated to the wellbeing of the children they serve and hope to serve. All are engaged in advocating for family care, actively engaged in strengthening vulnerable families, and engaged in robust family tracing and ethical and safe reintegration of children into families, as well as highly qualified ongoing case management of families to ensure permanency for children. The Coalition organization members each have qualified interim care for children while families are traced and assessed for placement.

Between them the organizations provide a great deal of training expertise in various aspects of social work, attachment and trauma-informed care, transition of orphanages and various family strengthening curricula, including life skill, skills and microfinance training. It is their goal to assist government leaders with national child directives that prioritize family-based care for all children, and to offer training and resources to equip other agencies to engage in best practices for family-based care.

While there is a great deal of focus on how the Coalition can work with and provide value to the various government ministries, including the development of policy, and workshops and training for other child welfare organizations and agencies, member orgs are also focused on how their collaboration can strengthen one another. Already, the four organizations are developing an effective referral pathway between coalition members and others working in child protection/welfare. They are collectively engaged in the collaborative development of rigorous/routine processes for referrals of children from government and police, including the standardization of forms, procedures and processes. This July, three of the coalition partners will be engage in a training to explore the development of robust foster care programs as an option for emergency and/or long-term family

placements for children separated from family care either until their own or a suitable long-term family placement can be identified, or as a long-term solution leading up to a domestic adoption into a Sierra Leonean family.

The power of this Coalition exists in its Sierra Leonean leadership and contextuality, and the national reputations each member organization has earned, and the power of collaboration to expand the reach and broaden the impact of each individual org.

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## Sierra Leone Coalition for Family Care

National Network of Best Practice Child Welfare Organizations to Promote Family Care for All Children

- Government Engagement
- Policy Development
- Standardized forms, processes, procedures
- Referral Pathways
- Resource and knowledge sharing

