



ANALYSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FOSTER CARE ARRANGEMENT FOR UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE CHILDREN AT TONGOGARA REFUGEE CAMP, ZIMBABWE

MHLANGA, Johanne^a, KAPESA, Mary Joyce.^b, & DZIRO, Charles^c.

ABSTRACT

Refugee life is a complex life defined by poverty, vulnerability and uncertainty, with vulnerability at the core of the matrix. However, unaccompanied refugee minors are even more vulnerable in their quest to navigate the thorny path of being refugees. To address their emotional, cognitive, social and physical well being, unaccompanied refugee minors are placed under foster care to ensure that they are protected. However, no sooner they are placed in foster care than they face the harsh realities of foster care arrangement. They suffer from peripheralisation of their welfare. Worse still, foster parents and child welfare personnel operates in what this paper calls a "tunnel vision" in which there is clear lack of adherence to the fundamental child welfare procedures. The current set up and practice is replete with challenges and the welfare of unaccompanied refugee children is compromised. Even more worrying is the fact that the approach to foster care neglects the quintessential and on the ground realities of the affected people. As if that is not enough, child welfare players appear to be distraught with other pressing issues at the expense of the most fragile group, the unaccompanied refugee minors whose welfare and needs are of utmost importance.

KEY TERMS: *unaccompanied refugee children, refugee, foster care, foster parent*

KEY DATES

*Received: 01 January 2018.
Revised: 09 September 2018.
Accepted: 12 September 2018.
Published: 02 December 2018.*

*Funding: None.
Conflict of Interest: None.
Permission: Not applicable.
Ethics approval: Not applicable.*

ARTICLE TYPE: *Original.*

INTRODUCTION

Wars, civil conflicts, generalised violence, religious conflicts and disasters have had a negative impact on victims resulting in them becoming refugees. In response to the ever increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers, humanitarian agencies put in place measures to protect and assist these uprooted members of humanity. However, unaccompanied refugee children's welfare has for time immemorial been inextricably woven into refugee social condition and children's welfare has been subsumed under the composite concept of "refugee protection." It is hard to peer beyond the tangle of humanitarian approach which pronounce unaccompanied refugee children's issues in the context of refugee protection in general. It is difficult to think seriously of unaccompanied refugee children (URC). There is need to study the social, economic, cultural and political condition of unaccompanied refugee children in foster care arrangement and write URC into the script of the refugee protection. Essentially, URC, like other minority groups, lack voice yet have a right to be heard and their views taken into account. It is through working towards better understanding of the situation of URC in foster care placement that a firm basis for working towards a proactive design of policies and programmes, implementation of policies and programmes and recognition of their rights and welfare is enhanced.

BACKGROUND

The phenomenon of unaccompanied refugee children is global, alarming and escalating. According to UNHCR (2015), there is an unprecedented 65, 3 million people around the world who have been forced from home. Among them are nearly 21, 3 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of eighteen (UNHCR, 2015). As if that is not enough, an important half of them are unaccompanied and separated children (UNHCR, 2015). These unaccompanied children are among the most vulnerable of the entire refugee population (Halvorsen, 2002).

Unaccompanied child

An unaccompanied refugee child (also referred to as "unaccompanied minor") is a "person who is under the age of majority and not accompanied by a parent, guardian or other person who by law or custom is responsible for him/ her" (Ressler, Boothby and Steinbock, 1988, p:7) as cited by Luster et al 2009 p:386. However, this definition leave scholars and the general public in suspense due to lack of clarity on the age of majority. For the purposes of this research, the definition of a child shall be in tandem with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As such, Article 1 of the UNCRC defines a child as "every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier."

Fostering

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (2004) fostering refers to situations where children are cared for in a household outside their family. The term fostering is used to cover a variety of arrangements such as traditional or informal fostering, spontaneous fostering and arranged fostering. ICRC (2004, p.44) defines arranged fostering as a situation "where a child is taken into the care of a family as part of an arrangement made by a third party, usually an agency involved in social welfare such as a government department, a religious organisation, or a national or international non- governmental organisation (NGO). This arrangement may or may not be covered by formal legislation." In many cases, arranged fostering is carried out by a government department mandated according to law to design, implement and superintends over legislation, policies and programmes on child welfare.

Foster family care

According to Bosco (n.d, p.2) "foster family is a form of rights based approach to child welfare, which provides planned period of alternative family care for a child, who has been deprived of his/ her birth family, either temporarily or permanently due to crisis or problem. It offers to a child protection and a nurturing environment in a family atmosphere, which is conducive for the healthy, normal growth of the child." It is ideal in situations where children are placed by a competent authority for the purpose of alternative care in family that has been selected, qualified, approved and supervised to meet the ideal standards for child protection.

METHODS

The aim and objective of the research was to examine the effectiveness of foster care practice for unaccompanied refugee minors in Tongogara Refugee Camp (TRC). In doing so, we adopted a qualitative research design that focuses on understanding and unearthing the experiences unaccompanied refugee children

and foster parents in the management and implementation of the foster care placement in TRC. Key informants were roped in to provide technical information on how they operate and perceive foster care in TRC.

Participants

The research benefited from a rich base of information from various groups that participated in the research. A total of 20 unaccompanied refugee minors who had been placed in foster care participated in the focus group discussions. This is almost 10% of the total number of URC placed in foster care in Tongogara Refugee Camp. Ten foster parents also participated in the research. They provided vivid experiences of being foster parents. Four key informants drawn from organisations involved in child protection in TRC were selected to participate in the research. These key informants are the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Department of Social Welfare (DSW), Terre des hommes Italy (Tdh) and Red Cross Society. These organisations provided rich vein of technical information on the state of foster care in Tongogara Refugee Camp. Research information was gathered through focus group discussions, interviews and questionnaires.

RESULTS

Selection criteria for foster care parents

The Department of Social Welfare which is the focal organisation and the custodian of all children in the refugee camp in line with the Children's Act, indicated that they do not have minimum standards/ yardstick for the selection of foster care parents. They indicated that they rely on refugees who volunteer to take unaccompanied refugee children on board. The same sentiments were echoed by other organisations who were key informants that there is no minimum standards in the selection of foster care parents. This was an indictment to the service providers since it exposes children to risks in foster care placement. For example, DSW does not get a medical certificate of foster parents before and or after placement of unaccompanied refugee children. The only qualification for one to be a foster care was/ is a refugee status. There are no home visits and background checks on the suitability of the potential foster parents. Therefore, there is no clear cut recruitment procedure for foster parents. This cast a doubt on the suitability and effectiveness of foster care placement as a strategy to manage unaccompanied refugee children.

The study found out that social workers from the Department of Social Welfare are responsible for facilitating the placement of unaccompanied refugee children in foster care. However, the study also found out that the DSW's mandate only starts and ends with identification and placement of URC in foster care. After this, Tdh takes over all the child protection issues. The study also found out that there is no clear cut documentation for foster care practice.

All the key informants indicated that they consult children before placing them under foster care arrangement. The same sentiment was echoed by 60% of the unaccompanied refugee children during the focus group discussions that they were consulted before being placed under foster care. However, 40% of the unaccompanied refugee children were not aware of whether they were consulted or not but what they remembered was the fact that they passed through the Department of Social Welfare's office where their personal details were taken. The findings indicate that DSW as the custodians of children in TRC is subscribing to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12 which is the foundational article for the respect of the child's views and participation in all aspects that affect them. DSW indicated that they carry out the Best Interest Assessments in consulting children before placement. This is in line with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' minimum standards. George et al (2003) argues that "foster care children are not merely statistics or victims and thus objects of pity to be ministered to be individuals and organisations. They are protagonists in their own right and have agency within the structures described. It is for this reason alone that their views, as well as those who are close to them, should be taken on board in decision making about their lives and future."

Key informants were asked if they have child safeguarding and protection policies in place. Tdh indicated that they have the policy in place while the DSW and Red Cross indicated that they do not have one in place. One striking finding was/ is the fact that all the key informants indicated that they do not have child safeguarding and protection policies and or contracts that are signed by foster care parents before/ or after placing unaccompanied refugee children. This therefore mean that foster care parents are not accountable to anyone in case of abusing children under their care. This glaring gap puts to doubt the suitability of foster care placement for unaccompanied refugee children in TRC.

The success of any child care arrangement hinges on a detailed individual care plan. Individual care plan for URC is extremely important. Having a care plan makes it possible for child protection workers to undertake monitoring and evaluation of the wellbeing of the child. The study however, found out that there is no care plan for individual unaccompanied refugee children placed under foster care. One key informant said, "*We do not have care plans in place. What we do is that when we receive these children, we simply look for potential foster*

parents or refugees willing to take unaccompanied refugee minors into their families. Once we identify them we then give them and ask them to sign acceptance form that they have agreed to take the child into their families). Lack of a care plan makes it very difficult to monitor and evaluate the success of the foster care placement in meeting the well-being of the child. While, foster care placement appeared to be the most popular care plan for unaccompanied refugee children for key informants, it came out that humanitarian workers are operating in what Rist and Kusek (2004, p.145) calls, "tunnel vision" a tendency of some staff or operational units to get stuck in a rut, carrying on with what they know, even when the shortcomings of the old familiar approaches are widely accepted." What is fundamental to note is that while there are laws and policies on the protection of children, the absence of proper care plan compromises the comprehensiveness and implementation of the laws and policies. The absence of care plans may be attributed to lack of knowledge of case management systems by service providers.

Monitoring is a very important aspect of foster care placement. To smoothen foster care arrangement, every URC placed in foster care should be monitored. Monitoring helps child protection agencies to ensure that URC are coping well with the new environment and to ensure that foster parents are receiving the right support in looking after URC. The study however, found out that there is no clear cut monitoring framework to assess foster care arrangement. Foster parents indicated that they rarely receive child protection personnel on monitoring visits.

Motivation for foster parents

All the foster parents (10) interviewed indicated that there is no incentive to motivate them in caring for the unaccompanied refugee children. One of the foster parents said, *"Foster parents are rejected by the office as they are left to bear the brunt of taking care of unaccompanied refugee children without support from the office (translated into Swahili as, Wazazi wenye kuchunga watoto mayatima wamekatajiwa na ofisi kwa kazi hiyo sababu wameshindwa kubeba muzigo huo wa kuchunga watoto wasio kuwa na wazazi bila sapoti ya ofisi)." Some foster parents indicated that there is no supervision and the service providers are nowhere to be found at the time of need. The views of the foster parents were echoed by key informants who unanimously indicated that there is no special support rendered to foster care parents and unaccompanied refugee children in foster care. Key informants indicated that the arrangement burdens foster care parents to an extent that some foster care parents decided to quit citing the lack of support from service providers. It makes it very difficult for foster care parents to do their best in providing child care to unaccompanied refugee children. The finding resonates well with scholarly views on motivating foster care parents. For example, Rhodes, Orme and Buehler (2001) believe that the reasons for quitting includes lack of agency support, poor communication with case workers, less post licensure training, lack of day care, transportation, no help to meet the health-care costs and difficulties with foster children's behaviour.*

Our study also sought to find out if foster parents are trained on child parenting styles. Our interviews with foster care parents revealed that foster care parents have never received training on child parenting. Foster care parents indicated that they use their indigenous knowledge child parenting systems. One respondent said in Swahili, *"Hatufunzwi wala hatujawayi kufunzwa juu ya kaki za mtoto, unyanyasaji wa mtoto na mafunzo juu ya muzazi. Tunatumiya ujuzi wetu wa nyumbani katika kuchunga watoto." This mean that, "we are not trained and have never been trained on child rights, child abuse and parenting skills. We use our indigenous knowledge system to look after these children."* Key informants also revealed that foster care parents are currently not receiving any trainings on child parenting, child rights and responsibilities and any other related child issues. Tdh said that, *"foster parents are not trained on child rights, child abuse and parenting styles. However, child protection committees are trained on child rights and responsibilities, child abuse and parental styles."* The finding does not resonate with scholarly views on foster care training. For example, Chipungu and Goodley (2004) note that training of foster parents is very much essential. George et al (2003) calls for the "professionalisation" of the foster family. They argue that more often than not, foster care is seen as doing something that comes "naturally"-namely parenting. Yet parenthood has increasingly become more self-conscious and reflexive and the challenge and demands involved in fostering have increased with many foster children displaying special needs (George et al, 2003). The glaring gap noted in this research casts doubt on the effectiveness of foster care arrangement for unaccompanied refugee children in Tongogara Refugee Camp. As if that is not enough, the findings above reinforce the arguments by Chipungu and Goodley (2004), who argue that foster parents complain that they feel devalued by child welfare workers/ social workers. They argue that there is lack of service coordination, poor service integration and even the unavailability of social workers at crucial moments.

Challenges faced by foster care parents

Burn out

Our findings indicated that one of the outstanding challenges faced by foster care parents is burn out. This was echoed by the foster care parents themselves who indicated that they have double tragedy of being refugees and foster care parents with limited support. Foster parents interviewed in this research also indicated that one of the greatest challenges they face was behavioural problems of URC especially teenage girls. One foster parent said, *"some of these children are a problem. They sometimes behave in wayward behavior that also stresses the individuals who are taking care of them."* This is loosely translated into Swahili as, *"Moja wapo ya hawa ni matatizo. Kuna wakati wanaonyesha mwenendo aotabia mbaya ambayo inahuzunisha watu wanao wachunga."* They indicated that teenage girls under foster care pose a lot of problems and controlling them is a problem. They cited the lack of adequate support as one of the factors forcing teenage girls to indulge in early sexual activities. The behaviour of URC coupled with lack of support and inadequate provisions of basic needs result in burn out.

Inadequate provision of basic needs

Foster parents indicated that looking after URC was difficult because they do not have adequate basic needs such as food for the children. They indicated that they receive food rations and core relief items just like any other refugees regardless of the extra burden they have. One of the respondents had to say, *"Hatupokeyi hata zawadi ya kipesa kutoka ofisini ingawaje tunachunga watoto ambao wanahitaji kusaidiwa. Tunapata tu chakula na vitu vingine kawaida kama watu wengine. Haya yana machungu sana sababu wana memba wa kamati tutiya ya ulinzi wa watoto wanalipwa bila kufanya chochote."* This is loosely translated as, *"We do not receive any incentives from the office despite the fact that we are taking care of children who are in need of support. We only get food and core relief items just like anybody else. This pains us a lot because child protection committee members are paid for literally doing nothing."* This view was supported by UNHCR who indicated that foster parents receive the assistance as every other refugee and each URC gets what accrues to every refugee child – which is a specific food allocation, health and education assistance. There are no incentives given to foster parents. The majority of foster parents thus struggle on their own as do other parents in the camp do unless they have access to other resources such as livelihoods. When the situation becomes especially difficult they may approach service providers for assistance.

Lack of support from service providers

The study also found out that foster parents bemoaned that there is lack of support from service providers. They indicated that service providers rarely avail themselves when they are needed most. Key informants also indicated that due to pressure of workload, they rely on the services of case care workers to monitor and support foster parents. One social worker indicated that, *"Due to the workload that we face we cannot afford to conduct home visits. As such we rely on child protection committee members to make follow up and give us feedback."*

Coping mechanisms of foster parents

Foster parents interviewed (50%) indicated that in order to cope with the challenges of being refugees and the extra burden of being foster parents, they started their small business such as selling vegetables, moulding bricks, reselling second hand clothes and Income Saving and Lending Schemes (ISALs). One foster parent had to say, *"Kwa hivyo nimeanzisha muradi wangu wa kuniingizia angalao kidogo ya kuongeza kwenye mapokezi ya pesa ninayo ipata kila mwezi. Kumbuka tunapata dola 13 kwa kila mtu. je unafikiri kwamba hizi pesa zinatoshleza kutuchunga sisi kama vile binadamu?"* This is loosely translated as, *"I have since started my own income generating project to supplement the monthly cash payment I get. Remember we get \$13 per individual and do you think that amount is sufficient for our upkeep as human beings?"* They indicated that these income generating activities earn them a living and make them to cope with the parenting challenges they face. This was echoed by key informants who indicated that some foster parents started livelihood projects in order to compliment the food and core relief item rations they receive.

Foster parents interviewed (50%) indicated that they seek counselling from the Department of Social Welfare and UNHCR once faced with parenting challenges. One foster parent said, *"Whenever I realise that I am tired of the problems I face in the daily upkeep of these children I go to the office to seek counselling and advise from officers."* They indicated that the burn out of taking care of foster children and coping with the burden of being a refugee requires counselling services. UNHCR indicated that when the situation becomes especially difficult they may approach service providers for assistance.

Challenges faced by unaccompanied refugee children

Child labour

The research found out that the most prevalent challenge faced by unaccompanied refugee children proved to be child labour. All the URC interviewed indicated that they are given more work by their foster parents and at times due to the workload they fail to do their school home work. One of the unaccompanied minors said, *"Life is difficult my brother", said one of the unaccompanied refugee minor. "I am made to work more than the biological children of the family I am staying with." But what can I do when I do not know the whereabouts of my parents" In Swahili he said, "Kaka yangu maisha ni magumu" Nina tumikishwa zaidi sana kuliko watoto wenye kuzaliwa na hiyi ninayo ishi nayo" Lakini nitaweza kufanya nini wakati ambapo sijuwi wazazi wangu wako wapi"* Most of the child labour activities reported are going to the fields, moulding bricks, vending at the markets, fetching water during the morning and in the evening and assisting in house chores. Key informants indicated that unaccompanied refugee children have reported that they are treated differently in their households in that they are given more work than the biological children.

Child sexual abuse

None of the URC interviewed indicated that they are sexually violated by their foster parents. This can be attributed to the fact that URC fear retribution for exposing their foster parents. However, key informants indicated that cases of child sexual abuse have been reported and are on the rise for children under foster care. They indicated that some of the foster parents (men) fled the camp after being accused of sexually violating their foster children. DSW indicated that some of the URC have been impregnated by foster parents. This view was also echoed by some foster parents who indicated that some URC are reported to have been sexually abused by their foster parents but they suffer in silence. This observation is in line with UNHCR (2003) who argue that while foster families are sought as the best interim solution for unaccompanied and separated refugee children, special attention has to be given to girls who are placed in the care of foster care parents. Girls are at risk of being sexually abused, trafficked, or exploited as domestic workers or child labour.

Physical abuse

Our findings pointed to a gloomy picture of the state of affairs for unaccompanied refugee children. URC interviewed (90%) indicated that they are subjected to physical abuse once they make mistakes at home. They indicated that even small mistakes such as coming late from fetching water may lead to physical beatings. One of the respondents said, *"We are beaten for no apparent reason!" exclaimed one of the UNMs. "Some of those foster parents relieve their stress on us"* In Swahili, this is translated as, *"Tunapigwa kwasababu zisizo onekana" Kasema wasiyo kuwa mumoja wapo ya hao watoto wasiyokuwa na watu wa kuwachunga. "Moja wapo ya hao wazazi wanao tuchunga humaliziya hasira ao hazuni zao kwetu sisi"* However, 10% of the URC interviewed indicated that they are not beaten but psychologically abused by their foster parents whenever they make mistakes at home. Key informants indicated that some URC reported beatings and that they do not get what they require so easily such as book covers, new clothes etc. Some report that they are denied meals.

Coping mechanisms of unaccompanied refugee children

Our findings revealed that unaccompanied refugee minors develops both positive and negative coping mechanisms to cope with their life situation in foster care.

Positive coping mechanisms

Response from UNHCR indicated that most of the unaccompanied refugee children suffer in silence since they do not see any other option. Some however speak to their leaders, friends, neighbours or child care workers who report the incidents to service providers for attention. Some also report their challenges directly to service providers.

Discussions with the unaccompanied refugee children indicated that in the face of challenges they face under foster care, they share their trials and tribulations with other refugee children. One of the refugee child said, *"Shida zangu huwa nazingeleya marafiki zangu bali nawakataza wasimwambiye mtu yeyote sababu naogopa malipizi kutoka wazazi wanao nichunga."* This is translated into English as, *"I share my problems with my friends but I tell them not to tell anyone because I fear retribution from my foster parent."* They indicated that by sharing with friends they relive themselves of the stresses they face under foster care. This shows the importance of the social ecological theory that indicates the importance of the various ecologies that surrounds a child in the society.

Negative coping mechanisms

Our findings from key informants indicated that some URC adopt negative coping mechanisms to deal with the challenges they face in foster care placement. For example, Tdh pointed out that due to poverty in the camp,

some URC indulge in early child sexual activities in order to have access to some basic necessities such as lotion, clothes and food. However, majority of the URC are reported to have been victims of early pregnancies. These sentiments were echoed by foster care parents interviewed who indicated that due to limited support from the service providers, URC end up indulging in early sexual activities.

Responds from key informants and foster parents pointed out that some unaccompanied refugee children indulge in drug abuse to cope with stressful refugee life. Key informants indicated that foster care arrangement has its own adjustment challenges for URC. Therefore, children may end up abusing drugs as a way of trying to cope with the challenges.

Effectiveness of foster care placement in Tongogara Refugee Camp

Our findings established that there were mixed feelings on the effectiveness of foster care placement for unaccompanied refugee children. Two key informants (50%) indicated that foster care is effective because it provides a child with a family set up that provides family care which is very critical for child development. For example, UNHCR noted that the foster care arrangement is effective in ensuring the wellbeing of the child in that the child is retained within their community where they are able to maintain the norms and culture of their country of origin. They also live in a family setting and the benefits that accrue such as individualised attention which would not be the case in an institution. They cited the fact that as a result of foster care arrangement, there are no unaccompanied refugee children staying outside the family set up and there are no children living on the streets in the camp. While the above view was acknowledged by other key informants, they were of the view that having children in a family set up does not qualify that foster care arrangement is effective in Tongogara Refugee Camp. They claimed that foster care placement is replete with challenges. For example, they cited the fact that unaccompanied refugee children are subjected to child abuse that has dire effects for their child development. For example, they indicated that there is serious physical abuse, child sexual abuse and neglect in the foster families. As if that is not enough, key informants indicated that lack of comprehensive follow up and collaboration by child protection organisations on foster care arrangement renders the whole arrangement a ritual.

Views to improve foster care arrangement

UNHCR noted that while an SOP is in place which clearly details what is to be done for the proper care of unaccompanied and separated refugee children, it is fundamental to ensure that the use of the SOP is enforced. The feeling is that not much is being done to adhere to the letter and spirit of the Standard Operating Procedures much to detriment of welfare of unaccompanied refugee children.

In the face of the complexities of foster care and myriad of challenges faced by foster parents, the Department of Social Welfare recommended that there is need to incentivise foster parents through giving them core relief items (CRIs) in order to motivate them to do their best in caring for the foster children.

Since the findings of this research is that foster parents are using "indigenous knowledge system" in taking care of foster children, the Department of Social Welfare and Terre des hommes indicated that there is need to put in place mechanisms to train foster care parents in order to strengthen their child parenting skills in line with child protection standards.

Our findings indicated that there is no clear coordination amongst and between child protection players in the camp. Terre des hommes therefore recommended that there is need for proper documentation of the foster care arrangement in TRC. Similar sentiments were echoed by Red Cross who argues that there is need to ensure proper coordination among child protection players in TRC to ensure the professionalisation of foster care arrangement.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Our research findings have several implications for child welfare practice in general and foster care practice in particular. Significant literature has documented the importance of training foster parents, it is fundamental that foster parents are prepared to take care of foster children. Foster parents are operating in a "tunnel vision" due to lack of training in parenting styles, child rights and responsibilities. Chipungu and Goodley (2004) notes that training of foster parents is very much essential. It is argued that most of foster parents are lay people with ordinary child protection knowledge yet foster care parenting comes with greater expectations and most foster care parents are found wanting.

Our findings also noted that child welfare personnel and social workers lacks the key skills for betterment of the foster care arrangement. This is very important in order to strengthen foster care system. It is because most social workers and child welfare personnel only have theoretical and academic knowledge base, there is therefore need to train them to have practical underpinnings of foster care. This should be accompanied with strong supervision. Our findings also reveals the complex nature of foster care placement in TRC, it is therefore

important to invest resources in the area of foster parent training as well as the training of child welfare personnel. This is important to do away with the "tunnel vision."

CONCLUSION

The research concludes that foster care arrangement for unaccompanied refugee children in TRC is the most tenable arrangement though not the best arrangement. It was noted throughout the research that foster care is replete with inadequacies and challenges. The gaps noted puts to doubt the effectiveness of the care arrangement. It therefore suffice to argue that the current foster care practice in TRC is not cohesive regardless of the many agencies operating and overarching to support unaccompanied refugee minors. There is lack of coordination among agencies, there is no clear cut monitoring system in place and the selection criteria for foster parents is replete with policy inconsistencies.

REFERENCES

- Bosco Mane. (n.d). *Foster Family Renewed Hope and a New Life: A Study on the Practice of Foster Care for Children in India*, National Research and Documentation BOSCO Mane, India.
- George, S., Oudenhoven, N.V, and Wazin, R. (2003). *Foster Care Beyond the Crossroads: Lessons from an International Comparative Analysis*, Sage, London.
- George, S., Oudenhoven, N.V. and Wazin, E. (2003). *Childhood: Foster Care Beyond the Crossroads: Lessons from an International Comparative Analysis*. International Child Development Initiatives, Sage, The Netherlands.
- Halvorsen, K. (2002). *Separated children seeking asylum: The most vulnerable of all*. *Forced Migration Review*, 12, 34-36.
- International Committee of the Red Cross (2004). *Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, Geneva, Switzerland.
- Kusek, J.Z and Rist, R. C.; (2004). *A Handbook for Development Practitioners: Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System*. The World Bank: Washington, D.C.
- Luster, T., Saltarelli, A.J., Rana, M., Qin, D.B., Bates, L., Burdick, K., and Baird, D. (2009). *The experiences of Sudanese unaccompanied minors in foster care*. *Journal of Family Psychology*, Vol 23 (3) 386-395.
- Ressler, E.M., Boothby, N. and Steinbock, D.; (1998). *Unaccompanied children: Care and protection in wars, natural disasters and refugee movements*. New York: Oxford.
- UNHCR. (2003). *Assistance to Unaccompanied Refugee Minors: Report to the United Nations General Assembly*, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions. Geneva.
- UNHCR. (2015). *Figures at a Glance: Global Trends*. Global Appeal 2016-2017, Geneva. <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-a-glance.html>.