

FOR GROUP DISCUSSION: TWO CASES

- Understanding how SOS Parents and children respond to moving out

Helping SOS Parents and their children adapt to their new life is a complex affair for management, when assessing future benefits and possible risks. What can we learn from this case study? As it is mentioned in pilot studies, the physical process of moving out does not mean that social inclusion and networking will be accomplished.

The two cases are based on two recorded and anonymized interviews - one with an SOS Parent, and one with her young teenager in care. The family now lives in a small group home, 100 kilometers from the nearest SOS Village.

Two group discussions, 1 hour in total

Purpose: To understand strengths and risks for SOS Parents and their children.

Please read case A and B and discuss the questions. Identify possible risk factors, and how they can be prevented by pre-placement planning, and post-planning follow-up from staff.

(der kan indsættes fotos, men kun når personer ikke kan genkendes - vi skulle nødtigt støde Botswana)

CASE A: Interview with SOS Parent Abena

Abena was an SOS mother for many years, until she moved out in a small village 2 years ago as an SOS small group home parent. She now cares for seven children, who are between three and 15 years old.

Before moving out she had a good network and long-term friendships with other SOS mothers. She was excited to start fostering. She describes that her older children were very afraid and confused when they were told about moving out, and she spent much energy in dialogues with them to understand what would happen.

In these two years, her children have learned many skills and new responsibilities: looking after the chickens, helping her with all the daily chores in the house: cleaning, washing, buying food, etc. She does not think that they enjoy it, but they have accepted their duties and learn from them. They also have friends in the neighborhood who regularly come and play with them. Abena is happy that *“Now I have the freedom to guide them in life, and pass on my knowledge and skills. I no longer feels restricted by a lot of guidelines and routines for how to raise them – I can do what I think is best for them, and I work to make them independent: they can go wherever they want to”*.

Her new life also has challenges:

Abena doesn't have much contact with her neighbors. She doesn't really feel accepted in the community yet, and she no longer sees her friends in the Village.

Her two other challenges are the remoteness of the small village, and her financial situation. She points out: SOS Parents inside SOS Villages and those living outside are paid the same amount of money. Also, Village Parents also receive donations from visitors and the community. People in

her community don't donate or support her otherwise. Abena also describes her larger expenses: it happens that one of her children gets sick and need medical attention – she must then call a doctor and pay for a phone consultation, or wait for hours before he can come, and pay even more. If she has to get medicine by prescription, it's a long travel to the nearest pharmacy. There are many other challenges due to living in a remote village. For example, it's difficult and expensive for her relatives to visit, and for buying the food she needs.

Group discussion A 30 minutes:

Before moving out, how can we work to make sure that our SOS Parents:

- *Maintain their social relations with Village Parents after moving out? (For example: form a group of mothers, a WhatsApp group, other solutions?)*
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- *Are accepted, supported and included in their new community?*
- *Can have access to transportation, and social and medical services*
- *Finance according to cover their real-life expenses*
- *Make a procedure to follow up and adjust the process according to their feedback?*

CASE B: Interview with Abena's young teenage girl in care, Azuri

Azuri is eleven years old. She speaks perfect English, and she is very intelligent.

Azuri grew up with a very disciplining private foster mother (not an SOS mother), who also taught her many skills. When her foster mother remarried, Azuri entered the SOS Village when she was seven years old. She was from another ethnic group than the other Village children: *"I made many friends when I started in the Village school, but in my house, there was a lot of negative peer pressure. My age mates were not good friends – they were not encouraging and everyone I asked for help for my school studies would not help, so I had to keep myself in the house all day long. My Mothers tried really hard to help, but it didn't work. The others didn't like that my English was good.*

But life has changed ever since I came here: I have friends in the neighborhood who help me with school work, they don't say this or that is wrong, they keep trying. But here, I don't have any friends in school – they still think I'm a stranger, and the teachers are not as educated as before".

She is very determined about her future: Her favorite disciplines are English, Religion, and Creative arts. She studies very hard every day, and plans to become a doctor. This is also her advice for children who will leave their Village in the future: *"They should do their best to cooperate with their SOS Mother. They should not be afraid of moving out: they should think "I will make new friends, and pass my exams, just try to do everything right, then I will be happy".*

Group discussion B 30 minutes:

- *How can we make sure that children moving out are accepted in school, and receive education according to their level of learning?*
- *How can we plan for regular feedback, and listen to the voices of children and youth who moved out?*
- *How can we adjust to their feedback, and support them to minimize the risks of living in a foster family?*
- *What have we learned from the two cases, and how can this be included in our procedures and plans for moving out?*