

CSE Research: Short films for practice Research Briefing Note #12



Successful reintegration for separated children Claire Cody

Text of the Film

“Every year, across the world, many children become separated from their families. They can end up living and working on the street or being exploited in households, factories, fields and other spaces. Those working with separated children want to help them reintegrate with their families and communities, but what does a ‘successfully reintegrated’ child look like?

Well, according to children and young people, it means having access to:

- *food, shelter and love;*
- *having friends;*
- *going to school;*
- *feeling happy;*
- *being respected;*
- *and being included in the community.*

So reintegration is not simply about rescuing children and returning them to their homes. It’s about overall well-being - helping them be part of the normal everyday rhythms of the communities they come back to.”

Research Summary

The reintegration of separated children, including children affected by sexual exploitation and trafficking, has attracted greater attention and resources from international organisations and child protection agencies in recent years. Despite the amplified focus on this area of work, rigorous evaluations of these endeavours are rare and it is not always clear what lessons are being learned and what ‘successful reintegration’ actually looks like (Jordans *et al.*, 2012). A focus on specific ‘groups’ of separated children (for example former child soldiers, street-connected children, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, trafficked children and child migrants), has to some degree led to knowledge blockages between organisations supporting reintegration efforts (Cody, 2015). In addition, there has been little consultation with children and young people to understand important elements of reintegration, as understood by those who have been assisted.

This film is based on the findings of an inter-agency research project initiated at the Centre for Rural Childhood at the University of the Highlands and Islands, that aimed to develop a toolkit to help organisations better understand, monitor and evaluate reintegration initiatives.

The process for developing the toolkit included: undertaking a literature review exploring the reintegration experiences of children affected by varying forms of adversity; analysing the results of an online survey with 51 professionals with experience of working in the reintegration field; and facilitating consultations with 89 children and young people living in seven different countries with various experiences of separation who had been assisted by organisations (for more details see Cody 2013a/b).

The aim of the consultation was to understand children's views on two main areas: what children and young people felt were the most significant changes that had happened to them from their involvement in a reintegration programme; and what indicators, in their opinion, showed that a child had 'successfully reintegrated'.

During the consultations, the children and young people (who were from Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Albania and Serbia), talked about a number of different dimensions that constituted 'successful reintegration' in the different contexts where they lived. This included having their basic needs met, gaining emotional support, safety, developing good relationships with the family and community, displaying certain skills and behaviours and being in education and/ or employment (for more details see Veitch, 2013).

What is clear – from both the experiences of practitioners and children and young people – is that reintegration is not simply about reunification i.e. returning children to families and communities and reporting on the numbers that have returned home; it's about overall well-being. The research also identified the different elements that are necessary to achieve a sense of well-being as well as the different stakeholders that need to be considered in reintegration efforts - the family, peers and the wider community (Cody, 2015).

Questions for practice reflection

You may want to discuss or consider the following:

- Do you listen to children and young people's views on what is important to them in their reintegration?
- How do you define 'success' in your reintegration work - is it based on the numbers of reunified children?
- Do you work on different levels – working with not only separated children but the families and communities that they belong to, in order to achieve successful reintegration?
- How do you develop monitoring and evaluation indicators? Are the children and young people you work with involved in this process?

**Is there someone you know who would benefit from seeing this short film?
If so, take a minute to pass it on <http://youtu.be/wgwjW7jtSjE>**

To cite this film

University of Bedfordshire (2015) *Successful reintegration for separated children*. Available at: <http://youtu.be/wgwjW7jtSjE> (Accessed day, month, year).

References

Cody, C. (2013a) *Findings from the Survey 'Monitoring and Evaluating Reintegration Programmes for Children'*, Perth: Home: The Child Recovery and Reintegration Network http://www.childrecovery.info/fileadmin/pdf/CRC006_281_29.pdf

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Jordans, M., Komproe, I., Tol, W., Ndayisaba, A., Nisabwe, T. and Kohrt, B (2012) 'Reintegration of child soldiers in Burundi: a tracer study', *BMC Public Health*, 12:905-1007.

Veitch, H. (2013) '*Feeling and being a part of something better*': *Children and young people's perspectives on reintegration*, Perth: Home: The Child Recovery and Reintegration Network http://www.childrecovery.info/fileadmin/pdf/CRC007_01.pdf

*Watch out for the Centre's new international project working in partnership with Family for Every Child and Retrak to improve reintegration outcomes for children affected by sexual exploitation

The International Centre

Increasing understanding of, and improving responses to, child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking

The International Centre at the University of Bedfordshire is committed to increasing understanding of, and improving responses to, child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking in local, national and international contexts. This is achieved through:

- academic rigour and research excellence
- collaborative and partnership based approaches to applied social research
- meaningful and ethical engagement of children and young people
- active dissemination and evidence-based engagement in theory, policy and practice



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Staff at the International Centre work collaboratively in teams with internal and external staff on applied research, evaluation, consultancy and training. We prioritise a focus on children and young people's participation, taking this seriously in all aspects of our work.

The University of Bedfordshire has been awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for The International Centre's pioneering research into child sexual exploitation. This prestigious prize is the highest form of national recognition open to higher and further education institutions in the UK.

What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?

The following definition of CSE is that used in the government guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation' (DCSF, 2009, p.9)

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.