

ACCESSING INTERIM CARE SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN IN BO CITY

PRIMARY READERS: HEADS OF INTERIM CARE CENTERS AND GOVERNMENT

MESSAGE: DISABLED CHILDREN ARE VERY FEW IN INTERIM CARE CENTERS/ORPHANAGES IN BO CITY

Introduction

Interim care services are alternative care systems for children in Sierra Leone. A lot of vulnerable and excluded children are found in communities, some have lost their biological parents whilst some are not taking of properly. The Child Right Act clearly states that the best place for the child to grow and live is the family.

ICCs are established so that they complement the efforts of Government in rendering care and protection for Sierra Leonean children.

The interim care homes are doing well in admitting other children in their homes, but disabled children are very few. In order to increase the presence of disabled children in ICCs and to mainstream disabilities, this document serves the purpose. This document also serves to inform Government and Donors to mobilize resources for disabled children.

Challenges faced by ICCs while admitting disabled children

- Physically challenged and visually impaired children have special needs; attention and care. Many resources are needed to meet this goal; some institutions are not ready to admit them into their homes.
- Most of the heads of these institutions have little or no ideas on Disability issues, thereby placing fewer premiums on Disability.
- Most of the structures are not disabled friendly which does not make disabled to move freely.
- Government and Local Councils are not adequately supporting these homes.

Way forward:

1. Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs, Local Councils and child protection partners to formulate and enforce guiding principles for the admission of children into ICCs to be non discriminatory.
2. Mainstreaming Disabilities will be enforced in ICCs; this will discourage discrimination among children in these homes.
3. Meetings and workshops are held to train personnel running ICCs on Disability issues.
4. Local Councils to establish child protection units to look into the affairs of all categories of children and to make budget allocation on Disability issues.

5. MSWGCA, Child Protection Agencies and Local Councils to make rules and regulations for those parents who neglect their children.
6. Donors to increase their funding to these homes.
7. Government and Local Councils to enforce payment of license fees annually for the operation of ICCs.

Conclusion:

Monitoring mechanisms should be put in place by Government, Local Councils and Child Protection Agencies to effect compliance by donors and owners of ICCs, so that the plights of disabled children are addressed.

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