



CHILDREN MOVING ALONE

Massive Open Online Course

CASE STUDY

Title page: Child sitting alone
Photo credit: Tommy Trenchard, Panos Pictures

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Background

Annually, hundreds of thousands of children migrate alone around the world. Lacking the protection of primary caregivers, these children are at heightened risk to all forms of violence including trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced labour, physical abuse and torture. They face homelessness, poor health and psychosocial impacts, malnutrition, fear, loneliness and even death. Providing the most suitable alternative care for unaccompanied and separated children is vital - offering them a protective and caring environment.

With the aim of improving provision of suitable care and the manner in which it is offered, an inter-agency group led by IFRC and International Social Services created a specialised Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on **Caring for Children Moving Alone: Protecting Unaccompanied and Separated Children**.

The free, six-week MOOC aims to increase the knowledge and support improved practice of tens of thousands of local front-line workers who make decisions about the care and best interest of children on the move every day.

The MOOC covers the following topics:

- Why unaccompanied and separated children are on the move, the risks they face and, how best to respond to their circumstances.
- Understanding the importance of offering a range of suitable alternative care options in a country and how this can offer protection to unaccompanied and separated children on the move.
- Illustrating examples of suitable alternative care and support for unaccompanied and separated children being practiced around the world.
- The skills those working with unaccompanied and separated children on the move should have.
- How to fully assess needs and vulnerabilities of unaccompanied and separated children and make decisions that are in their best interests.

How to build coordination and cooperation between the humanitarian sector and alternative care professionals to improve responses to unaccompanied and separated children.

Who was Supported and How

To date the following agencies have collaborated, as a task force, with IFRC and International Social Services on developing the MOOC: Better Care Network, International Federation of Educative Communities (FICE), International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), Hope and Homes for Children (HHC), Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Detention Coalition (IDC), International Organisation on Migration (IOM), Latin American Foster Care Network (RELAF), Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages International, Terre des hommes (TdH), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The project was funded by the Government of Switzerland, the Government of Germany, the Canadian Red Cross, and through financial, technical, logistical, and human resource contributions by the Task Force members.

Successes

- Since 2019 approximately 30,000 frontline personnel have joined the 6-week course.
- Participants have joined from at least 181 countries spanning all regions of the world.
- The average rating of the MOOC by participants has been 4.9 out of 5.
- The interagency group has drawn on their various specialized technical capacities to develop content to the MOOC.
- The MOOC has allowed agencies to have a more unified, standardized approach in addressing the needs of unaccompanied and separated children.

Challenges and Difficulties

Marketing the MOOC in ways that are contextualized across regions and sub-regions was a step that could be improved to reach more participants.

During the start-up phase of the project, funding was a challenge. This meant fundraising continued after the project had started and this added unpredictability to the project.

The sustainability of the MOOC has been secured through CELCIS and Future Learn as online hosts, yet, facilitated learn-er engagement is not built into the process due to funding constraints.

Lessons Learned

- Development of the MOOC:
 - Before any content was developed promising practices from around the world were identified and analysed.
 - Identifying resources in languages other than just English were prioritized in order to ensure that participants from around the world could draw on various materials.
 - Content design was led through expert consultations with the interagency task force.
- Having a lead educator role allowed for ongoing dedicated work and continuity of the project. It also provided a resource to provide direct responses and support to participants.
- Future Learn platform, where the MOOC is hosted has flexibility and adaptability that allow for careful monitoring while MOOC runs are live.
- Global sign-up to a MOOC is dependent upon global marketing to target learners. Marketing needs to be contextualized in each location to reflect local needs and approaches.
- It is important to build in timelines and costs for quality assurance, especially regarding translation work.

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The course is excellent, very interesting and informative and the comments and information posted from everyone participating in the course is fabulous. The course has made me really reflect on my work practise and research information which will impact on the service I deliver. I will keep learning and developing and use reflective practise to ensure I can continue to meet the needs of vulnerable young people I support.

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MOOC Participant