

Events and Announcements

Catch up on the latest updates on webinars, trainings and conferences from our network

Introducing Mission Vatsalya: Stakeholders' perspectives | India Alternative Care Network(IACN) with support from Butterflies and Miracle Foundation India

The Indian parliament has passed several landmark laws, including the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015, amended in 2021, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, and the Right to Education Act 2009, in its commitment to protect and promote the rights and welfare of children. India is a signatory to two significant international agreements, the Hague Convention on the Adoption of Children and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which call for the systemic improvement and bolstering of the child protection system in the nation. In this direction, Mission Vatsalya is the Government of India's latest endeavour, to provide a roadmap for achieving development and child protection. The vision of the scheme is to secure a healthy and happy childhood for each and every child in India; ensure opportunities to enable them to discover their full potential; and assist them in flourishing in all respects, in a sustained manner.

IACN in its initiative to facilitate the learning and exchange of knowledge on the issues related to children at risk situations organised a seminar "Introducing Mission Vatsalya: Stakeholders' Perspectives" on November 15, 2022, at India Habitat Centre. The discussion brought out the key highlights of the scheme and its implications for child protection and family-based care in the country. The eminent panellists comprised practitioners, researchers and academicians with expertise and in-depth knowledge of the subject area. The complete report of the seminar can be accessed [here](#).



Manthan- A Workshop on Strengthening Foster Care | CERl (Children's Emergency Relief International)

Six districts in Rajasthan plan for an innovative foster care program.

On 29 November 2022, Government Officials - Child Welfare Committee (CWCs), District Child Protection Unit (DCPUs), and staff of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) from the Udaipur division (Udaipur, Banswara, Chittorgarh, Rajsamand, Pratapgarh, Dungurpur) met for "Manthan", a workshop on strengthening Foster Care, organised by Foster Care Society in partnership with UNICEF and CERl. The workshop aimed to design a foster care program that is globally relevant and locally applicable.

The way forward was clearly etched in 4 ways:

1. Capacity-building training is necessary for CCI staff, DCPU staff, and CWC members. The CCI staff pointed out the need for training to effectively prepare the ICP and SIRs to facilitate the child's placement back into their family or in family-based care. DCPU officials shared the necessity to develop skills of the social workers in preparing comprehensive Home Study Reports required to identify suitable foster care families for children.
2. It was discussed that a clear strategy should be laid down to guide the foster care process and to run the foster care programme smoothly. This would include a step-by-step guide to carry out the placement of a child in a foster care arrangement.
 - i. Two layers of screening to select the best potential foster parents
 - ii. Standard counselling of potential foster parents and children
 - iii. Ensuring the best interest of the child during the matching process, and
 - iv. Continuous support to family and foster children before and after placement.
3. It was highlighted by the stakeholders that they require handholding support in implementing the process of foster care. This includes support in form of counselling for the prospective foster

Manthan- A Workshop on Strengthening Foster Care

parents, child and birth parents, at the time of placement, during, and after the placement of a child in foster care arrangement.

As expressed by the Government stakeholders – the DCPU officials and CWC members, there is a need to create awareness regarding foster care as a means of family-based alternative care for children in risk situations among society by using different mediums like social media, posters, pamphlet, videography, advertisement etc.

Insights also came from chief guests including comments from Mr Govind Beniwal's (State Child Protection Consultant, UNICEF, Rajasthan) session:

- ▶ The current foster care system has progressed through 3 phases - in the first phase institutionalisation of children in need of care and protection was focused. Later, adoption gained momentum where efficient structures and protocols were developed to carry out the process. In present times Non-Institutional Alternative Care (NIAC) has gained the impetus.
- ▶ From the year 2014, Foster Care Rules that came into existence in Rajasthan and Udaipur are operating successfully. From the year 2020, Rajasthan Government rolled out all NIAC options.
- ▶ NIAC in Rajasthan is provided for 4 Services: Vatsalya Yojna: Individual Foster Care, Samarth Yojna: After Care, Goradhaya Yojna: Group Foster Care, and Utkarsh Yojna: Sponsorship.

Mr Devashish Mishra (National Child Protection Consultant, CERl) observed during his session:

- ▶ Foster Care program is running globally for about 150 years. But there have been many problems in other countries, the primary being placement breakdowns, which severely affect a child's development and emotional health.
- ▶ Foster care placements could be made more stable and successful through careful matching of child and foster care parents. This requires a comprehensive Home Study Report, assessing the willingness of prospective foster care families to foster the child, the family structure, dynamics and relationships among family members. Mr Mishra cited the relevance of regular counselling and continuous follow-up. He

emphasized that to ensure a successful foster care experience for a child and family, a child's placement in foster care should not be seen as the end of the process, but rather a beginning.

Additional Information

Foster Care Society – Foster Care Innovator in India

Foster Care Society's mission is to establish and model best practices for foster care organisations seeking to help foster youth and their parents throughout India. Foster Care Society set out to move children from institutions such as orphanages to individual families. We believe that every child deserves a nuclear family that can provide love and support.

Foster Care Society is working for the last 6 years and is currently managing 25 Foster families in the Udaipur division. Currently, Foster Care Society is working on a Project with UNICEF named "Strengthening Foster Care Programme in Udaipur Division" and working on "Non-Institutional Alternative Care" schemes. The project objective is to spread awareness and strengthen "Foster Care Programme" in the Udaipur division.

