



AIM Restoration Home

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR REINTEGRATION

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INTRODUCTION

The two central purposes of the AIM Restoration Home (ARH) are rehabilitation and reintegration. These are both holistic purposes which are served in meeting a girl's physical, emotional, spiritual and educational needs in a well-rounded, integrated program that seeks the best for each individual's well being.

It may be helpful to review a basic definition of both these terms, for our purposes, we will define these terms as follows:

1. *Rehabilitation* – the holistic care of a girl with their reintegration as the goal for their plan of care. Rehabilitation includes meeting a girl's physical, psycho-social, educational (academic, vocational, arts, and life skills) and spiritual needs as outlined in the ARC plan of care.
2. *Reintegration* – the holistic re-entry of a girl into family, community and society. This is a complex process that involves in-depth planning, execution, and follow-up.

Rehabilitation is typically viewed as a system that begins when a girl comes into our care. It is important to remember that Rehabilitation and Reintegration processes both start the first day a girl arrives.

Reintegration is a process that should be the guiding principle in the child's plan of care. The thoughts and process of reintegration should be involved in all areas of the girls' daily scheduling. Therapy and counseling sessions, education, life skills, etc. in order to best equip the girls to reintegrate successfully into society – whatever form of reintegration the girl undergoes.

Research has shown that girls in Cambodia have a strong need to be a part of a community, beginning with family as the ideal form of community. After family, in this order of priority are the extended family, kin relationships, foster care, residential care, and finally – institutional care. ¹ When contemplating the effectiveness of institutional care, it is necessary to consider that time spent in a center has a direct correlation to the "good" it offers to its residents. In other words – aftercare is like medication- only a certain amount is needed. Anything more or less than is needed can have a toxic effect. Herein lays the tension-institutional care can be a positive experience in healing and restoration if reintegration happens as soon as it is safely possible. With this in mind, we must begin looking at reintegration as an intricate part of rehabilitation. ²

¹ References are-World Vision's Children Deprived of Parental Care study, 2006 and the independent study conducted for Hagar's Project and World Hope, 2007. Each study has determined that, even though institutional care has become somewhat standard for victims of sexual exploitation- we should be exploring and pursuing other more viable, long-term options.

² See Derks, Annuska, et al., Review of a Decade of Research on Trafficking in Persons, Cambodia, 2006, Asia Foundation. Page 39 has a simplified chart (attached), which outlines basic necessities – most surround reintegration.

After consideration of the above issues ARH needs some guiding principles and procedures for how it approaches reintegration and the processes of working with its girls. The following serves as an organizational guideline for approaching and performing the task of reintegration.

THE THREE I's – Definitions

There are three general guiding principles that must be followed at all times when planning a girl's reintegration:

1. **Immediate** – there is no reason to delay the process of planning and executing a plan of reintegration.
2. **Involved** – the girl must participate in her own reintegration.
3. **Individual** – each girl will need a different approach – no two children are identical.

Immediate

When a girl arrives at ARH, she may have already spent a significant amount of time wondering what is going to happen to her. In some cases she may have spent upwards of 2-3 months in an assessment center and has no idea of what is happening to her future. The process of reintegration planning should begin during the intake process at ARH.

Within two weeks, a family assessment should be completed. This initial contact with the family does not involve the girl being present. This assessment does not mean the girl's family will have access to the girl. Rather; this is a means of obtaining vital information about the girl, her family and the situation for the girl's reintegration.

This process has proven to put the girls at ease and allows them to focus on their counseling sessions instead of worrying about their family. In addition, counselors and social workers will have much needed information to guide their sessions.

For Example:

Prior to the girl and her counselor building a relationship of trust, the girl will have a tendency to keep vital information about her family from her counselor, this especially the case when the truth about the family is condemning. A girl's first inclination will be to protect her family. Initial family and community assessments will give us a clearer picture of the girl's family and community. As a result the counselor will be able to better protect the girl and lead her through the healing and reintegration processes.

Involved

Every girl has the right to be involved and to have a say in her future plans. It is important to ask a girl what she thinks about her situation and what she would like to see happen. It should be our goal, as long as it is reasonable, to work toward the girl's desires. When family reunification is not possible, ARH staff in close collaboration with the girl herself, and in cooperation with MoSAVY, and any other partner agencies will determine her plan for the future.

For younger girls we need to ensure that we listen and offer possible options related to their preferences. Many will want to go back with family, which, when appropriate, we will work hard to accommodate. There are some girls who cannot return home safely; we need to include them in discussions about their situation so that they are able to come to terms with difficult family circumstances and work toward alternate solutions. This should be a regular discussion that attempts to understand the girl and her needs.

For older girls, particularly 18 years and older, we need to be aware that they are considered independent adults and are able to make their own decisions. They need to be involved in the decision to stay at ARH, understanding this is a voluntary program. Should they want to leave the program following their court case, we need to respect their wishes and assist them as much as possible with transitioning out of ARH. This should involve MoSAVY, the community and group leaders, and possibly NGO's such as LICADHO.

There should be time, either in social work sessions or independent times in which a girl can talk about her desires, hopes and dreams for the future. This may include family visits, phone calls, and letter writing.

As well, the Ministry of Social Affairs will be involved with each girl's reintegration. We need to explore options with the girl and share these ideas with MoSALVY's social workers in order to work toward the girl's best interests.

Individual

Each and every girl is an individual and needs to be treated as such. Though there are processes and procedures for reintegration, we need to keep in mind that every girl has a different situation that requires individual attention, creativity and focus.

This means involving the girl, the staff, the family, possibly other organizations, and the Ministry of Social Affairs. The broader the circle of cooperation, the more solid the reintegration can be. We cannot use a formula to do reintegration – instead, a great deal of prayer, thought and effort must go into each and every girl's reintegration plan. We must be creative and thoughtful in this process. We as a staff must look for solutions on how to overcome obstacles.

BACKGROUND FOR REINTEGRATION PROTOCOLS

There is a legal requirement in doing a family assessment immediately. According to the **MoSALVY Reintegration and Follow Up Programme – A Handbook**, July 2001 – a family assessment is required in having custody of a girl. In the above mentioned handbook, there are clearly defined processes for how a girl is to be handled in regard to family assessments, we will cover these protocols in the approach segment if this document.

As well, there is a recent policy – **Policy in Alternative Care for Children April 2006**, which was signed by Ith Sam Heng, outlining the government's position and standards on care of children. In this policy there is substantial information on alternate means of care, as well as reasons for keeping a girl's stay in institutional care as brief as safely possible.

APPROACH TO REINTEGRATION

It is important to state again that reintegration is a complex and lengthy process. It requires prayer, time, resources, complex thinking as well as creativity. Many situations in Cambodia are extremely complicated. Families are poor, parents have serious problems and/or the villages they are from have their share of difficulties. For example, there may be brothels in the community or some of the neighbors do drugs or gamble. None of these are necessarily reason enough not to reintegrate a girl. However, they are reasons to be cautious and to do thorough preparation and follow up, but not to prevent a child from returning home or reintegrating into an alternate form of care.

Objectives

The main objective is to ensure the reintegration of a healthy (physical, emotionally, and spiritually), productive, and financially stable young women into Cambodian society. Single events and experiences cannot become the framework for policy development in ARH. Instead, we should ask questions and do thorough research to develop a solid reintegration program.

Outcomes

1. Each girl has the coping tools to deal with the trauma triggers and obstacles to a successful reintegration.
2. Each girl has a supportive mentor to help her work through the problems she will encounter in her reintegration.

To meet this outcome reintegration follow-up visits by ARH should be made at least once a month for the life of the girl.

3. Each girl knows how to access community resources to help in her reintegration. These resources would include the local church, NGO's, and both local and national government agencies.
4. Each girl will be enrolled and attending school or be gainfully employed.

Reintegration Process

As stated previously the reintegration process begins the day a girl enters the ARH and continues for a minimum of three years.

In-Center Execution

It is ideal to have each of the following items completed prior to a girl's reintegration; however, that is not always possible. In cases where it is not possible to complete each item prior to reintegration every effort should be made to complete them as soon as possible after the girl has been reintegrated.

A further explanation of the items listed below is found in the "ARH Reintegration Work Book."

- *Obtain from the girl her desires, hopes, and dreams for her future.*
- *Write a plan for the girl to reach her desired future and share it with her.*
- *Determine if repatriation will be part of the girl's reintegration, and, if yes, begin the process immediately.*
- *Complete family tracing, family assessments, and the girl's family visits.*
- *Obtain identification documents for the girl.*
- *Complete community assessments.*
- *Complete court cases and security assessment concerning abusers.*
- *Complete the girl's physical health evaluation.*
 - *Medical History*
 - *Current Status*
 - *Post Reintegration Needs – i.e. Medications/Clinic Appointments*
- *Complete the girl's psychosocial health evaluation.*
 - *TF-CBT*
 - *Narrative Therapy*
 - *Reintegration Role Plays*

- *Relationships with Girls at ARH*
 - *Relationships with ARH Staff*
 - *Relationships with Others Through Studies Off ARH Campus*
 - *Social Interactions During Community Service Projects*
 - *Knowledge and Demonstration of Coping Tools Necessary for Reintegration*
- *Parental/Family training completed.*
 - *How to Care for Children*
 - *How to Protect Children from Trafficking*
 - *Children's Rights and Cambodian Law*
- *The need for parental/family support assessed and provided.*
 - *Employment*
 - *Micro-Loan*
 - *Monthly Material Support – i.e. food, healthcare*
 - *Housing/Home Repairs*
- *Completion of the girl's education.*
 - *Academic*
 - *Vocational*
 - *Life Skills*
- *Determine the type of reintegration most appropriate for the girl.*
 - *Transitional Community Home*
 - *Community Based Small Group Home*
 - *Foster Care*
 - *Kinship Care/Child-Headed Household*
 - *Independent Adult Living*
 - *Family Reunification*
- *The girl's reintegration employment and/or continuing education are in place.*
- *Reintegration support systems in place.*
 - *Local Church*
 - *Government – Local/Regional*
 - *Partner NGO's/Agencies*

Post-Reintegration Follow-Up

Post-reintegration visits are conducted for a minimum of three years from the date of each girl's reintegration. These visits are a crucial component of long-term reintegration success. During the visits assessments are undertaken in each of the following areas and assistance provided whenever necessary.

- *The girl's Status in each of the following areas:*
 - *Physical*
 - *Safety*
 - *Economic*
 - *Psychosocial*
 - *Spiritual*
- *Changes in Family Assessment*
- *Changes in Community Assessment*
- *Additional Assistance Needed for the Girl or Her Family*

The ARH Post-Reintegration Follow-Up Form should be used to document each visit. In addition, ARH policy, "Jesus and Reintegration Follow-Up," should be a part of each visit.

Below is the schedule to be followed for the post-reintegration visits. The only exceptions to this schedule would be for those girls repatriated to Vietnam, visits for these girls would occur four times annually for three years. Also, when a girl has been reintegrated to a village more than a two hour drive from Phnom Penh, half of their post-reintegration visits may be conducted by telephone.

**SCHEDULE FOR
POST-REINTEGRATION VISITS**

TIME PERIOD	POST-REINTEGRATION VISITS
1 st Month of Reintegration	1 Visit Per Week
2 nd Month of Reintegration	2 Visits
3 rd Month and Forward	1 Visit Per Month

Family Tracing and Visits

ARH should involve the Ministries of Social Welfare in tracing the girl's family origin. Attention should be given to the wishes and opinions of the girl as to whether and when she wishes to go home. Family visits will be given regularly and where appropriate girls will be reintroduced and reconciled with their family. Family tracing is done in order to obtain accurate information regarding the girl's birth date, family situation, and family history as well as any other information that may be important to the girl's situation.

We involve the Ministries of Social Welfare by contacting the MoSALVY office and then contacting the MoSALVY District Social Worker in the child's home province (See attached list).

Family Assessment and Reunification

When a girl's family origin is traced and a full family assessment has been completed, ARH staff needs to make an assessment of a possible family reunification. Many steps are involved in this process; further investigation: community assessment, local market opportunities, whether skills training is easily adaptable to the community, counseling, decision making with the girls and possible small business loans and professional family reintegration. All this information must be analyzed to decide the feasibility of possible reintegration into their community and when it is feasible we can organize a formal reintegration plan. It is important at this stage to involve MoSALVY social workers and other agencies like LICHADO. Layers of accountability will ensure a more thorough plan for reintegration.

Support for Income Generation Opportunities for the Family

ARH should see this part of the process as the corner stone of the whole rehabilitation/reintegration process. ARH's focus in reintegration of the child (to family whenever it is possible) is dependent on providing income and financial support FOR THE CHILD. This involves liaison with local resources for income generation schemes taking into account market opportunities and other environmental factors. If there is not viable economic stability, girls are more likely to fail and either return to sex work or become vulnerable to other forms of exploitation.

Here is an example:

If we send a girl to tailoring school and she completes the program, ARH should purchase her a sewing machine and other tools needed to do her job. As well, we should as part of the girl's reintegration find out what possible jobs there are where she is being reintegrated. Social workers should assist her in securing a job before she leaves the program.

Another example might look like this:

A girl is ready to leave ARH and is ready to reintegrate, but the girl's family is having difficulty making enough money to support the family. The mother could make money selling fruit or running a coffee cart. We should work with the family to assist them in setting up a small business or getting the equipment to begin these businesses to support the family.

In each case a contract should be made with the girl and her family to ensure they understand we are providing support for the good of the girl and her family's welfare. A second contract with the community leader would also be good to obtain for legal support. In either example it is always better to make a loan than give a gift.

Resettlement Independently in the Community

As a national average among the NGO community, 60% of victim survivors are willing to be resettled into their previous community. Where family reunification is not possible, ARH staff in close collaboration with the girl will determine her plan for the future. Whether she returns to her home community or wants to remain in Phnom Penh, we must assist the girl in making an informed decision. Other agencies like LICHADO, SKY and MoSALVY can assist in this process. (See Contact List – attached).

Monitor and Follow Up

Monitoring and follow up is the most important part of the whole reintegration process. Emphasis is made on the physical (economic, health, safety), psychosocial, and spiritual aspects.

The aims of follow-up are:

1. To assess the current situation of girls and women in their families or community and make sure that they are well treated.
2. To analyze the situation of their business or job.
3. To provide counseling/education to the girl and her family.

In order to facilitate reintegration, ARH will provide each girl or her family with the necessary equipment, start up capital and follow up services to develop a sustainable income. Providing good quality follow up of former residents is a key to successful reintegration. Top priority is given to follow up in order to avoid placing girls in a situation that may lead to re-trafficking and /or re-entering sex work to have a sustainable lifestyle.

Government Involvement

To assist Cambodia in moving forward, we must work with the government. In this, we have greater influence as well as giving the government a means of learning and incorporating good practices. A number of successful NGO's have made good use of this relationship and have had a good experience. The Friends Organization, CWCC, World Vision and others have opted to immerse themselves with the internal processes of Cambodia – both working to revise those that do not work well and to find deficiencies and strengths in the current system.

For our purposes we are working primarily with the Ministry of Social Affairs, with maybe some additional participation with the Ministry of the Interior. The principle idea behind reintegration in Cambodia is that there needs to be a high degree of cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSALVY, DoSVY, and OoSVY) and compliance with the MoSALVY Reintegration and Follow Up Programme Handbook, July 2001. There are a number of forms that are necessary in order to develop a clear system of interaction between the NGO, Ministry of Social Affairs and local authorities to insure the safest and most effective reintegration of girls. Again, it is very important to remember that involving the government agencies does not reduce our responsibilities to the girls. In other words, we do not consider a follow up visit by a government agency to mean that we ourselves can have less follow up visits. This option means that there is more work involved, but this still is the best option for our clients.

If the family cannot be considered an option due to safety or a substantial risk to the girl's well being, then other options must be considered before utilizing a long term stay at ARH. These options will be primarily dictated by the client's desires, but must also be communicated to MoSALVY's social workers.

For other options like kinship or child run households or others involving additional risk, these options should be explored with the girl, her family, the village and group leaders as well as MoSALVY and other local groups (such as LICHADO). Other options might be extended family living, sibling living (with older siblings caring for younger siblings), foster care, and residential care. The last option, after exploring the above is to consider ARH a long term option.