

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



MINISTRY OF GENDER AND FAMILY PROMOTION

NATIONAL GUIDE ON A MINIMUM PACKAGE OF SERVICES FOR ORPHANS AND OTHER VULNERABLE CHILDREN (OVC)

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PREAMBULE

One of the missions entrusted by the Government of Rwanda to the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) is the coordination of activities relating to the promotion and protection of child rights in general, the rights of orphans and vulnerable children in particular.

The vision of the OVC response, as elaborated by Government is that OVC will be assisted to reach their full potential and have the same opportunities as all other children to active and valued participation in home and community life.

These orphans and vulnerable children have rights to a decent life, to essential services including health, development, education, a supportive family and community environment free from stigma and discrimination. All these match with the millennium development goals and the International Child Rights Convention.

The national OVC policy and its strategic plan include strategies to assist orphans and vulnerable children whose rights are violated for various reasons including the consequences of the genocide, poverty in some families and HIV/AIDS.

In order to implement the OVC policy and the HIV/AIDS control plan established by CNLS, using a multisectoral approach based on a participative process, MIGEPROF in collaboration with CNLS and other key partners have put in place a technical team composed of stakeholders who provide services to OVC. This technical team has prepared a document which suggests strategies to improve the quality of services provided to OVC.

The aim of the guidelines contained in this document is to help the stakeholders provide quality services to OVC and to support the GoR in its role of ensuring that child rights are not violated.

Public institutions, the civil society, the community in general and international organizations should work together for the survival, the welfare, and development of these children. Therefore, we should work hand in hand in order to ensure that these children get appropriate services they need to fulfill their rights.

Dr Jeanne d’Arc MUJAWAMARIYA

Minister of Gender and Family Promotion

I. CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

The current official data in Rwanda reveal that 29% of children under 18 are orphans and vulnerable children (DHS 2005, page 268)

The aim of this document is to facilitate and to harmonize the implementation of the activities aiming at the improvement of OVC well-being and to ensure sustainable changes in their lives.

It is a very easy tool all the stakeholders involved in assisting OVC can use : local or international organizations, community based organizations or faith based organizations.

The types of services listed in this document should not be implemented necessarily by one stakeholder only. Stakeholders should collaborate and each organization should contribute in its area of specialization. Each organization involved in assisting OVC should make sure that each child has access to basic services which satisfy his/her needs. Therefore, organizations should refer or help children meet organizations specialized in a particular domain which can provide specific responses to children's specific needs.

The ultimate goal of the long-term vision is to hand in the responsibility of ensuring the implementation, the follow-up and the evaluation of all OVC related activities to the local leaders, namely the districts, the sectors and other organs at the grassroots level and to involve the children themselves as direct beneficiaries.

All the stakeholders involved will bear in mind this long term strategy based on a close collaboration with the assigned organs and the direct beneficiaries, they will also empower the families in order to take their destiny proudly in hands.

II. OBJECTIVES

General objective:

To provide the guidelines for the coordination, the improvement of the services and collaboration in providing the services to OVC while implementing the national OVC strategic plan.

Specific objectives:

- Determine the principles and procedures for the identification of OVC in need of assistance.
- Determine the principles and procedures for the implementation, coordination, follow-up and evaluation of OVC interventions.
- Provide quality services to OVC, to ensure a geographical distribution of interventions and fair distribution of services.
- Ensure that each child gets the basic services he/she needs.

III. DEFINITION OF ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

An orphan is a child who has lost one or both parents.

*A vulnerable child is a person under the age of 18 years who is exposed to conditions which do not permit her/him to fulfill their fundamental rights for harmonious development.*¹

IV. CRITERIA OF VULNERABILITY

The criteria of vulnerability outlined in this document have been taken from the research: « A Situation Analysis of Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children in Rwanda: a participative approach » carried out by MIGEPROF and validated in May 2008.

These criteria of vulnerability will be followed by the local leaders, the stakeholders and the direct beneficiaries as they identify most vulnerable children. These criteria are not tools for scientific research which require measurable indicators. The numbering of these criteria does not mean that one criterion is more important than the other.

1. Malnourished children.

- The child is very thin (marasmus)
- The child is suffering from kwashiorkor
- The child does not get food quite often

2. Children with problems related to education

- The child has never been sent to school,
- The child has dropped out school,

3. Children suffering from chronic, intermittent diseases or children with disabilities.

- The child is sick quite often and does not have access to adequate health care due to the lack of means
- Child with disability (without appropriate health care)

4. HIV positive children (without appropriate health care)

5. Children who are emotionally traumatized

- Over the last three months, the child has shown quite often anxious or aggressive behavior)

6. Orphan who is lonely or living in a household headed by another child, without appropriate shelter or other means of subsistence

¹ National OVC policy, Rwanda, 2003

7. Children who are sexually, physically or emotionally abused.

- Child who is sexually abused
- Child who is physically abused
- Child who is emotionally abused

8. Children who work despite their younger age

9. Alcohol or drug addicted children

10. Children involved in sex work

11. Pregnant child, girl who is a teenage mother or a child born from an unmarried girl

- Pregnant child or unmarried girl with a child
- A child born from an unmarried girl

12. Another criterion suggested by the community involved in the identification of vulnerability criteria

V. INTRODUCTION TO A MINIMUM PACKAGE OF CARE OR SUPPORT

The idea of minimum package of support should focus on the identification and satisfaction of child needs (or rights which are not fulfilled). Children should get the basic support they need. These services should be provided by one or more stakeholders within a coordinated partnership.

Stakeholders should provide at least three services which are interrelated in order to achieve the objectives described in this document, especially in relation to the reference system.

SERVICES FOR ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN (OVC)

The services outlined in this document focus on the following child rights convention principles:

- the principle of the best interest of the child
- the principle of non-discrimination
- the principle of survival and development
- the principle of participation of the child in the actions and decisions that concern her/him.

These 4 principles remind the obligation of considering child rights and role in taking part in the actions and decisions that concern her/him. At the same time, these principles remind children's need for special protection due to the fact that they are vulnerable.

1. Health:

- Basic medical care provided through the health insurance scheme (*mutuelle de santé*)
- *Special medical care not provided through the health insurance scheme*
- PMTCT (Prevention of Mother to Children Transmission), VCT (Voluntary Counselling and Testing) and ARV (Antiretroviral therapy) for HIV/AIDS infected children/parents
- Education and prevention against infancy related diseases
- Education and prevention against other diseases and pandemic diseases
- Hygiene education
- Reproductive health and prevention against HIV/AIDS

2. Nutrition :

- Food assistance
- Nutrition education
- Promote food security
- Therapeutic nutrition for malnourished children and/or children who are taking antiretroviral drugs

3. Education :

- School fees and school materials
- Vocational training and tool kits/ funds to join a cooperative or to launch business
- Literacy courses and catch up courses
- Child development programme
- Special Needs Education for children with disabilities

4. Legal protection:

- Legal support to children who are abused or exploited
- Educate children and community on child rights and child obligations
- Provide support to child protection committees

5. Psychological and social support:

- Psychological support to children (counselling),
- Organize trainings on psychological and social support
- Leisure activities
- Consultation fees and special medical care
- Social assistance to children

6. Shelter

- Building repair and or construction of houses
- Household equipment and furniture

7. Reinforcement of family economy, social integration and skills development

- Reinforcement of family economy (cooperatives, regular loans, income generating activities)
- Ensure long term family autonomy

VII. OUTCOMES OF SERVICES PROVIDED TO OVC

SERVICE	OUTCOME
Health	Children are in good health. Children have access to quality health services including medical care, preventive care such as vaccination and information on disease prevention.
Nutrition	Children have enough food anytime. Children's growth is ensured
Education	Children go to school and/or have the opportunity to learn new skills. Children take part in useful activities or perform activities that are related to their age. Young children are attracted by the leisure activities performed by adults. Child development is ensured; children acquire new knowledge and develop their thinking abilities at home, at school or in other useful activities related to their age.
Protection	Children live in safe environment, they are protected from any form of abuse, and they are not abandoned or exploited. Children are protected legally and get the legal assistance they need. Children have at least an adult (18 years and above) who provides the required support and care.
Psychological and social support	Children are happy, in good mood and optimistic in general. Children are ready to cooperate and participate in various activities with other children and adults.
Shelter	Children live in a safe house that protects them from bad weather. Children are not discriminated in their house.
Reinforcement of family economy, social integration	The family has enough resources for children's wellbeing and development. The family gets the required social and economic support when needed and contributes to its economic and financial self-reliance.

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- According to the long-term vision described in this document, the District development plan should include the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of OVC interventions in their constituencies.

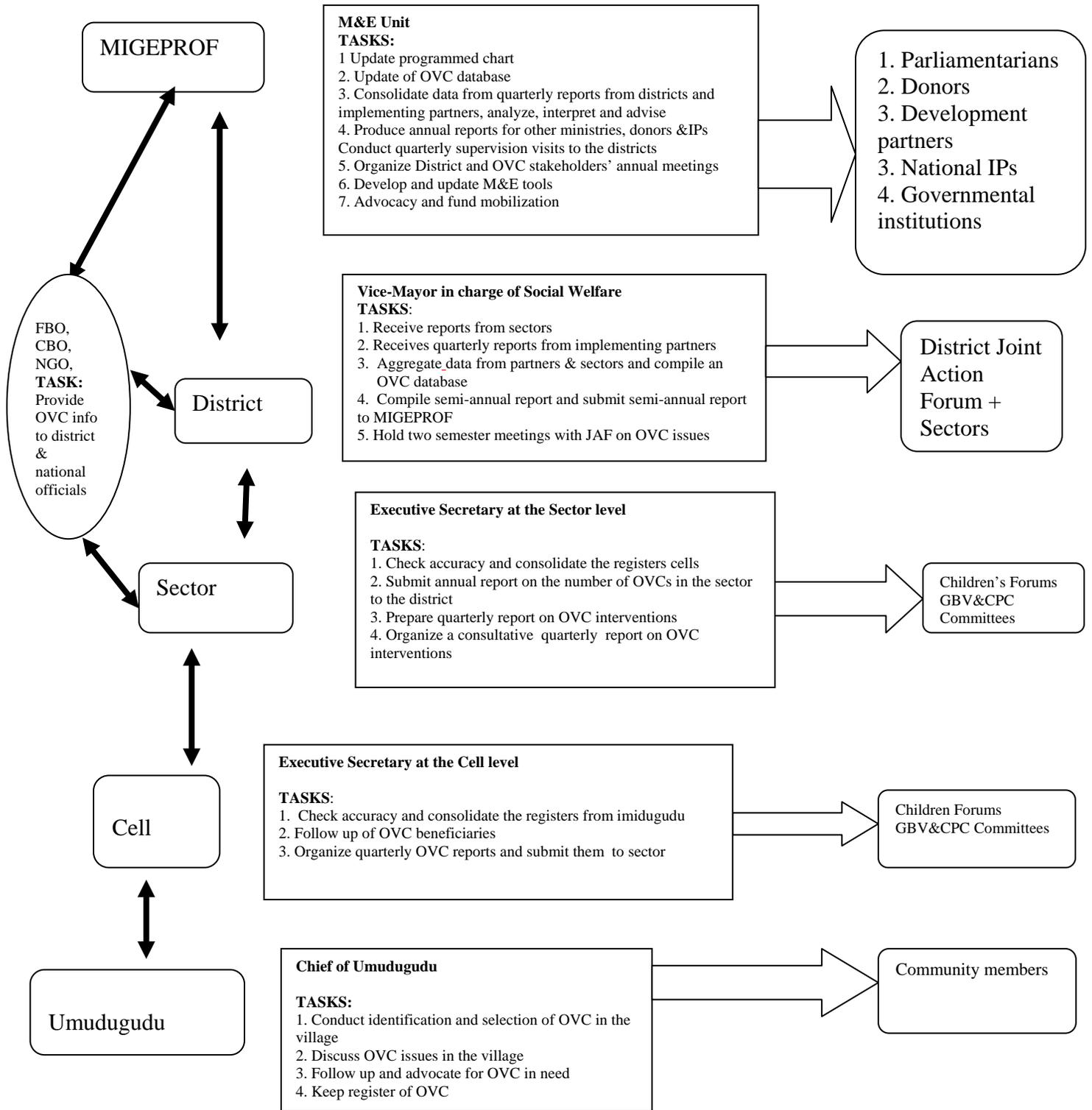
- The interventions should follow the geographical distribution principle and avoid any unnecessary duplication of services. The district and sector authorities should provide clear guidelines.
- The services should be provided in such a way that any discrimination and stigma is avoided among the beneficiaries.
- Services should be provided on time according to their nature and purpose.
- The stakeholders should collaborate closely with the existing organs such as the community based organizations, children's forum, gender based violence committees and child protection committees.
- The interventions should relate to the national policies and protocols and should be harmonized according to the norms and regulations in force.
- The interventions should aim at the self-reliance and participation of the direct beneficiaries (OVC, families and local communities).
- Any stakeholder involved in assisting OVC should abide by the national code of conduct set for all the stakeholders involved in assisting OVC.
- Districts should develop a reliable information system every stakeholder can consult, on the services provided to OVC in the District.
- Whenever a stakeholder cannot provide the services an OVC requests, he/she should refer that OVC to other stakeholders who can provide those services. The local authorities at the grassroots level (District, Sector) should make sure that this reference system is implemented successfully.

IX. COORDINATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISM

A separate document entitled « OVC Strategic Plan : Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, and Monitoring and Evaluation of the Minimum Package of support provided to OVC » outlines the activities, the indicators and the data sources, the data collection tools as well as the report development and submission system.

The table below outlines the coordination of the monitoring and evaluation system:

1.1 Data Flow and Responsibilities



CONCLUSION

Like any document that provides the guidelines, this document is just the beginning of the whole process. Every stakeholder at all the levels will have to implement it.

This document does not replace the previous documents relating to the policies and strategic plans, it provides additional information. The implementation of the guidelines will improve the quality of service provided to OVC.

The service provided to OVC and the context can change, that is why it is important to adapt this document to the changing situations.