

# REPORT

## Asia Family Placement Conference

Chiang Mai, Thailand 15-17 November 2011

A conference to share international best practice in local family placement for orphans in Asia as a positive alternative to institutional care.

This was a pioneering and unprecedented conference for the participating countries Asia, and jointly hosted by the Thai Department of Social Development and Welfare in the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and Care for Children.





On behalf of the Care for Children team, I would like to thank you for your role in making the first Asia Family Placement Conference such a success.

We have received excellent feedback from the delegates who attended the conference ranging from the quality of presentations, the excellent venue, and the family atmosphere. Clearly Care for Children cannot take all the credit for this, and so we are truly thankful for the extra effort everyone made to ensure this was the case.

Most of all we were so encouraged by the commitment to a high level of professional practice in Family Placement and the enthusiasm to continue raising standards in child care in all participating nations. Over the course of the conference we saw that the best way to do this is to share our ideas and experiences, and build lasting relationships with one another. Ultimately We are all working together as advocates for disadvantaged children in Asia to give them the best opportunities in life.

Of course, there is much that we have learnt and can therefore improve on for the next conference. Please do let us know if you have any further thoughts or ideas you would like to share with us.

I look forward to meeting you again soon,

**Robert Glover OBE**  
Founder & Executive Director  
Care for Children



## PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

The purpose of the conference was 'to share international best practice in local family placement for orphans in Asia as a positive alternative to institutional care'. This was achieved using two different but complimentary methods:

1. **OPENING DOORS** *by strategically envisioning key decision makers in governments*
2. **EMPOWERING** *grassroots practitioners*



## 1. OPENING DOORS

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### SHARING VISION

Our strategy is to share our vision of local family placement to influential decision makers across governments to help enable projects at grassroots level. With top-level directives and support, grassroots projects are free to develop more efficiently and effectively, without middle-management blocks. This approach also helps to open doors to other like-minded organisations.

### INFLUENTIAL LEADERS

His Royal Highness Prince Michael's presence at the conference as 'Guest of Honour' and as a VIP speaker assured that there was top-level representation and participation from the Thai the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Governor of Chiang Mai's Office. An audience was also arranged with His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, but was postponed due to floods in Bangkok. Furthermore, each country government delegation that travelled to Chiang Mai was led by at least one senior government official to represent their interest in developing family placement initiatives.

## 2. EMPOWERING

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### KEYNOTE SPEECHES

International experts shared best practise in family placement. Robert Glover then shared the Care for Children model of family placement with the use of a video and impactful stories of children being placed in families.

### WORKSHOPS

These were delivered by the Care for Children training team, together with international guest speakers. They were highly interactive and very well received by delegates. Feedback shows that sharing and learning from each other's experiences proved to be a particular highlight for delegates.

### DISCUSSION GROUPS, Q&A PANEL, CONFERENCE FEEDBACK

Throughout the conference delegates were encouraged to interact with Care for Children staff and each other. During the workshops time was set aside for discussion, and feedback forms were filled in at the end. A Q&A panel of experts was arranged for the final day, and time was set aside to deliver feedback both from the main stage from the Heads of Delegation, and through anonymous feedback forms.



## CONFERENCE DAY 1 OPENING DOORS & ENVISIONING



*Ms Mayuree Yoktree opens the conference*

### **Chiang Mai Social Development and Human Security Office & Chiang Mai Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

*Represented by Mrs Mayuree Yoktree, Chief of Chiang Mai Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office*

Ms Mayuree Yoktree opened the conference, welcoming all the international delegates to Chiang Mai and commending the purpose of the conference.

### **HRH Prince Michael of Kent** *Guest of Honour*



*HRH Prince Michael signs the Vienping Children's Home guest book*

Prince Michael expressed his thanks at being welcomed so warmly to Thailand for his second Care for Children conference. He spoke movingly of the impact that placing children into families has on the lives of both the children and the families, and commended the strategic partnership between the Thai government and Care for Children to jointly organise and host a pioneering international conference for the sake of orphans in Asia.

### **Thai Ministry of Social Development and Human Security**

*Represented by Mrs Chalutip Punnabutr, Senior Expert in the Department of Social Development and Human Security*

Mrs Chalutip Punnabutr spoke of her pleasure that the Asia National Placement conference was being held in Thailand. She spoke with some excitement about the partnership between Care for Children and the Thai Department for Social Development and Welfare to develop Family Placement in Thailand.

### **Care for Children**

*Represented by Robert Glover OBE, Founder & Executive Director of Care for Children*



*Ms Chalutip Punnabutr delivers her VIP speech*

Robert Glover spoke to the conference about the exciting new developments in Family Placement in Asia. He described how China can become a model of best practise to other countries at earlier stages of development, and how Asian countries can start to partner and learn from one another's experiences. He described how all work in this area must be strategic, developmental and sustainable.



*Robert Glover OBE delivers his keynote speech*



*Delegates listen to keynote presentations on the first day*

### **International delegates**

Government delegations	Independent country delegations	Apologies
Thailand China Mongolia Vietnam Cambodia	India Japan Malaysia Sri Lanka	North Korea Nepal  <i>(Fully registered and expecting to attend, but unable to due to sudden unfortunate obstacles)</i>

There were also independent delegates from the United Kingdom, USA, Canada, Australia, and Denmark.





HRH Prince Michael with Mrs Jiraporn Yamamoto

## CONFERENCE PHOTO

Over 160 people attended including VIP guests, government delegates, INGOs, media and friends. Everyone gathered for a large group photo, which all delegates received a copy of.

## COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS

Presentations were made by Heads of Delegations, which provided a fascinating overview of each country and its current stage of development. There were very different styles of presentations, giving cultural insight into each country.

## VIENPING CHILDREN'S HOME VISIT

Invited by the government, a group from the conference, including HRH Prince Michael, visited the Vienping Children's home in Chiang Mai, which has been appointed by the government to be the first project site for Care for Children's pilot project in Thailand. It was a special and memorable day for everyone associated with the home, after many weeks of preparation, all of which was superbly organised and overseen by Mrs Jiraporn Yamamoto.



HRH Prince Michael with staff and children from Vienping Children's Home



Robert Glover with the Vice Governor of Chiang Mai

## KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Experts addressed the conference concerning a number of social welfare issues:

### **Evaluating outcomes for children in alternative care**

*Presentation delivered by Professor June Thoburn CBE, Emeritus Professor of Social Work at the University of East Anglia.*

Professor June Thoburn CBE spoke around her wide-ranging international research in this area. She demonstrated the wide variations in practise and outcomes in developed countries, and discussed what might be considered as good or bad outcomes. She also spoke of lacking statistics, research and understanding of some of the issues in Asia.



Prof. June Thoburn delivering her keynote speech

### **What is family placement and why is it needed?**

*Presentation delivered by Barbara Hudson, a Director of the British Association of Adoption and Fostering, Scotland.*

Barbara Hudson, Director of the British Association for Adoption and Fostering in Scotland, considered the benefits of children who cannot stay with their own families being placed within foster families. She described the physical and psychological benefits of family placement, as well as the qualities and characteristics of successful foster careers.

### **The wider effect of institutional care on society**

*Presentation delivered by Rev. Paul Cowley, Director of Caring for Ex-Offenders and The Wilberforce Trust.*

Rev. Paul Cowley, who has been working in the UK prison system for a number of years looked at the effect of institutional care on both individuals and society as a whole. By using the powerful example of his own troubled family history, he described how children brought up in institutions are more likely to develop behavioural and emotional problems and end up in the prison system.



## CONFERENCE DAY 2 EMPOWERING



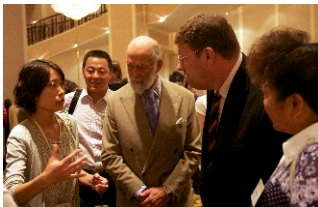
Conference hall



Ms Nasan-Ulzii delivering a country presentation for Mongolia



Care for Children staff and volunteers at the conference



HRH Prince Michael meeting delegates at the conference



Some of the Chinese delegation



Releasing lanterns into the Chiang Mai night sky

### History of Foster Care in the UK

*Presentation delivered by Dr. Chris Beckett, Senior Lecturer of Social Work at the University of East Anglia.*

Dr. Chris Beckett described the shift in the UK in the 20th century away from institutional care to family placement as a means of caring for children. This developed from a primitive early "boarded-out" model, to foster carers meeting the child's higher-order emotional and psychological needs. In the 1980s the "permanency" movement was influential and challenged a system where children "drifted" from one temporary placement to another

### WORKSHOPS

The Care for Children training team joined with international guest speakers from around the world to deliver nine workshops, in three languages: Thai, Chinese and English. These enabled delegates to think through grassroots implementation and consider how we can learn from other countries' experiences.

1. **Attachment and Bonding:** This workshop provided participants with an opportunity to reflect on attachment theory, consider its importance within foster care, and share strategies for building secure attachments.
2. **Disabled children in family placement:** This workshop explained why it is important to develop community based rehabilitation services versus the institutional rehabilitation model; as well as discussing methods by which this can be achieved.
3. **Matching and planning:** This workshop focussed on the practical issues faced by Fostering services when placing children into families. For example: What information needs to be provided? What factors need to be taken into account, be they environmental, social, cultural, religious, educational, emotional, psychological? What processes need to take place?
4. **Life Story work:** This workshop helped participants to understand how one's 'experience' (past, present and future) influences each one of us. It then considered the importance of Life Story Work in the development of children who are fostered, and how this can be implemented.
5. **Why family placement?:** This introductory workshop used examples from foster care in China to illustrate some of its benefits, including health improvement, emotional and behavioural development, improved educational attainment, self care skills, and preparation for independence.
6. **Finance in foster care:** This workshop looked at the high cost of residential child care compared to the more cost effective option of local, family-based care. As well as looking at the financial cost it considered the social cost, both to the child placed and the ongoing post care costs to society in general.
7. **Behaviour management:** This workshop provided an opportunity to explore the following questions: What sort of behaviour is the most difficult to manage? Why is it particularly difficult managing the behaviour of fostered children? Why do fostered children present difficult behaviour? How do we make things better and not worse?
8. **Preparation for independence:** The workshop emphasised that 'preparation for independence' needs to be tailored to suit the needs of each individual child depending on the unique situation. The workshop looked at the different services that children and foster families find useful.
9. **Strengthening Marriages:** This workshop considered how marriages can be strengthened, in order that they provide a more secure and stable family for children and foster children.

### CELEBRATION DINNER & LIGHTING LANTERNS

There was a beautiful celebration dinner next to the River Ping. Delegates then joined together to light over a hundred lanterns and send them into the night sky as a symbol of hope for the disadvantaged children we aim to collectively serve in Asia.





## CONFERENCE DAY 3 FEEDBACK



*Dr An delivering feedback about the conference on behalf of Vietnam*

### QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Robert Glover hosted a Question and Answer session with a panel of experts that included: Mrs Emma Zhang (China), Professor June Thoburn (UK), Mrs Barbara Hudson (UK), Dr Chris Beckett (UK), Mr Jason Tam (Hong Kong), and Mrs Jiraporn Yamamoto (Thailand).

Questions had been placed in a box before this session by delegates, and questions were then opened to the floor. A number of interesting topics were discussed, from the technicalities of implementing family placement programs, through to engaging officials and selling the vision at a government level.

### NETWORKING

Throughout the conference delegates from different countries throughout Asia had the opportunity to network with one another, as well as build relationships with the expert keynote speakers. This building of a community of people of influence, who care passionately for the welfare of disadvantaged children must be considered one of the great achievements of the conference. In feedback forms submitted by the delegates, many commented that networking and relationship building was one of the highlights of the conference for them.

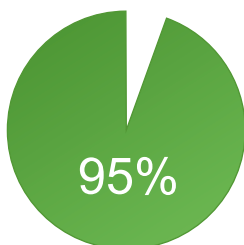


*Child care experts sit on the Q&A Panel to answer questions*

### FEEDBACK FORMS

Delegates completed feedback forms at the end of the conference to help the Care for Children team evaluate the conference. Below is some of the feedback received:

- 95 % rated the quality of the keynote presentations as excellent
- 94 % rated the quality of the workshops excellent or good
- Many delegates said that networking and sharing experiences with other delegates was a particular highlight
- The venue and organisation made a great impression on government delegates
- The UK data presented was interesting, but Asian countries need to collect more Asia specific data
- A workshop for those totally new to Family Placement was requested
- Translation of workshops into three languages took time, and left little room for questions at the end





## OUTCOMES & RECOMMENDATIONS



### OUTCOMES

Following is a summary of the main outcomes achieved as a result of the conference:

1. **China** was confirmed as a model of best practice and centre for influence in Asia. Care for Children is continuing to maintain the relationship with the China Social Workers Association and looking to enhance its project work into poorer regions of China.
2. **Thailand** government officials are excited about the partnership with Care for Children, and during the conference publicly endorsed the pilot project in Chiang Mai which is due to start in early 2012.
3. **North Korea** (DPRK) MOU is being discussed and a project is due to start in May 2012.
4. **Mongolia** is eager to sign an MOU with Care for Children; (this project remains subject to funding. Mongolia has offered to host the next Asia Family Placement Conference in Ulaan Bataar in September 2012).
5. **Cambodia** has invited Care for Children to run a workshop in Phnom Penh.
6. **Sri Lankan** representative has submitted an outline proposal for Care for Children to meet with the government.
7. **Indian** representative proposed approaching the government about a pilot project in New Delhi or Varanasi.
8. **Vietnam** has invited Care for Children to hold government meetings in Hanoi.



PLACING  
ORPHANS  
INTO GOOD,  
LOCAL  
FAMILIES!

### CARE FOR CHILDREN MANAGEMENT TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Following is a summary of the next steps Care for Children needs to make to follow-up with the outcomes:

1. Review the existing 5 year plan (2008-2013)
2. Create a 5 year projected budget (2012-2017)
3. Schedule research trips to new countries
4. Create a development plan for Care for Children's training team
5. Improve and increase fundraising efforts:
  - a. Set up regional office in Hong Kong
  - b. Develop fundraising strategy in USA
  - c. Strengthen UK Fundraising office
  - d. Explore possibilities of Care for Children rep. office in Australia



Children await the arrival of HRH Prince Michael





*"...ultimately, we are all working together as advocates for disadvantaged children in Asia to give them the best opportunities in life."*