

# Counting the Cost

## Vulnerable Children & Institutional Care

Growing up in the care of a safe, nurturing family is the human right of every child.



How many children live outside family care?

The Truth is: We Don't Know.



### What do we know?

- 132 million children in households have lost one or both parents
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**BUT... these numbers represent children living within the care of a household - generally a parent or relative. So, this orphan count doesn't tell us who needs care.**

- At least 8 million children live in institutions

**BUT... this estimate may be low. Many institutions or orphanages are not registered and go uncounted.**

- There are an estimated 100 million children living in the streets worldwide

**BUT... it's only an estimate. Children living on the streets are difficult to count. We don't know how many lack a safe, nurturing family network.**



### One child outside family care is too many.

To serve children well and meet their rights to family, we must know who they are, where they are, and what they need.

- Institutions, not households are most likely to hold unparented children. Efforts to gain an accurate count of children in institutions is essential.
- We must ensure that a full spectrum of services is available to benefit children. This must include reunification, kinship care, domestic and intercountry adoption.
- Options must be made available to children in a reasonable amount of time. Science and common sense tell us that institutional care and other impermanent settings cause developmental delays - kids face serious physical, mental, and social loss because we act too slowly on their behalf.



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703.299.6633  
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