

How to Use the Tracking Progress Tool: A Guide

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Introduction to the Guide

Completing the Tracking Progress Initiative Tool is a **large commitment** and a **significant undertaking** and the Steering Committee thanks you for taking the time to review the steps to completing the Tool and undergoing this process. We hope that you will find our explanations and guides useful.

This Guide lays out our recommendations for how to best use this Tool, based on piloting in several different countries and contexts. However, each country and Working Group that uses this Tool will have different needs and considerations. We encourage users to take the approach that best suits their particular context, using this Guide as a suggestion.

Furthermore, if your Working Group has particular learning or suggestions from your implementation of the Tracking Tool that may be valuable for its improvement or use in other countries and contexts, **you are encouraged to share that learning with the Steering Committee by contacting contact@bettercarenetwork.org** so that we may update this Guide and/or the Tool itself.

Considering the Tool

Considerations for Using the Tool

What is the Tracking Progress Tool?

In order to advance the rights and best interests of children in your country, it is important to have a good understanding of the current situation, including quantitative and qualitative data regarding children and families in the country, information on the legislation and policies in place and how they are implemented, an overview of the systems serving children and families, and the areas where progress is needed. To that end, this Tracking Tool is a diagnostic tool which uses the **Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (“the Guidelines”)** as its framework. **It consists of a series of survey sections that ask questions in order to help you gather information about the aspects of the alternative care of children in your country.**

The process of answering the questions gives you the opportunity and means by which to collect existing information and identify missing data on children’s care, as well as to identify the areas in which your country is, and is not, meeting the **Guidelines**.

How Do You Pave the Way to Using the Tool in Your Country?

Use of this Tool should be undertaken with an inter-agency group of national-level actors. Through the Tracking Tool process, these actors will collaborate on gathering and analysing data and reporting a final summary of findings that will inform care reform efforts in your country. Beginning to implement the Tool will involve garnering interest among a variety of actors and advocating for its use. The value of this Tool is not only in the final result that it produces, but also in the process itself: gathering together key actors involved in children’s care and reviewing together the many aspects of the care system.

The decision to implement the Tool in your country will likely be made as a result of previous efforts to raise awareness of the problems of children deprived of parental

care, position the issue on the national agenda, and advocate for enhanced data collection. If your country has already expressed a commitment to care reform, the Tool can be used as part of national-level actions to improve children's care and comply with the Guidelines. It can also be used to help set an agenda for care reform and implementation of the Guidelines. Additionally, you might also consider using the Tool as part of the process of reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child as it will help you gather the necessary data.

What is Involved in the Process?

The process of using the Tool will be quite lengthy, as there are over 200 questions in the Tool, some with additional follow-up questions, which ask for a wide variety of data from multiple sources that need to be collected, validated, and analysed. Therefore, we recommend using the Tool over a period of **a few months** with a **multi-sectoral and multi-level team of stakeholders (a Working Group)**, in order to: access different data sources that are available to the different sectors represented, delegate responsibilities in regards to data gathering, identify all the data needed to answer the questions, collaborate on plans for data collection where data is missing, take time to review and analyse that data, and then use your data to set an agenda for enhancing children's care in your country, presenting your findings to the appropriate decision-making bodies where possible.

How Will You Use the Tool?

After answering the questions in the survey sections of the Tool, you will be able to download a record of all of the data your Working Group has entered into the survey. This file will serve as an important resource for policy development and actions for improvement as **it will inform your Working Group's final report of findings** from the Tracking Tool, which you can then use to advocate for reforms in your country.

As you decide how to make this Tool part of your country's care reform efforts, you should consider how the data gathered through this process, and your final report of findings, will be used. Consider the following questions as you plan the process:

- Who will the report be presented to and how can it be used to advocate for better implementation of the Guidelines?
- Will the report help to set an agenda for enhancing the implementation of the Guidelines?

- Will the report help to set an agenda for improving data collection on alternative care, based on gaps and discrepancies in data?
- Will the report be published and disseminated as a standalone report?
- What opportunities will other stakeholders have to discuss and provide feedback on the report?
- Which organisations and agencies will have ownership of the data and the report?
- Who will be given access to the data in the report and how will the data be used? (You can choose whether and with whom the data is shared)*
- Will the report contribute to a regional report as part of a wider regional perspective and to support regional analysis?
- How will processes for completing the Tool be evaluated? What worked well and what could be done to improve the process?

*For considerations about how to store and share the data entered into the survey sections, see '**Storing & Sharing Data**'.

Building a Team

Team Approach

It takes a team to complete the Tracking Progress Tool! This Section of the Guide explains who should be involved in the process. It is anticipated that a multi-agency team, or Working Group, will need to be brought together to identify the data and evidence required to answer the questions in the Tracking Progress Tool. This will enable your Working Group to develop as accurate and complete a picture as possible of the alternative care of children in your country. Government officials should be part of the Working Group, possibly even leading the process, as the principal duty-bearers with regard to children's rights and the monitoring of alternative care resources. However, a team will need to draw on resources and expertise from across sectors.

Assembling the Working Group

We have found that use of the Tracking Tool typically begins with one agency or small core group of stakeholders who have expressed interest in using the Tool as part of an agenda for care reform in their country. This lead agency and/or planning group will likely lead on initiating and facilitating the Tracking Tool process, contacting and convening other key actors and performing outreach to build a Working Group that includes multiple stakeholders from multiple sectors.

The **lead agency and/or planning group** will be responsible for:

- **facilitating the process** and **developing a timetable** for the activity;
- identifying which **stakeholders** will be involved in the Tracking Tool process and will make up the Working Group for the Tool (see '**Composition of the Working Group**' below for suggested participants);
- convening those stakeholders and getting them committed to the process
- identifying **dates and venue** for an initial face-to-face meeting to introduce the Tool, and subsequent meetings or workshops; and
- **creating an online Working Group** by contacting the Tool's administrator and adding each member's email address.

To build a Working Group to complete this Tool, we recommend that you leverage existing groups and resources. Those countries with an existing national-level Working Group or similar team of stakeholders working in children’s care can first engage that group in undertaking the Tracking Tool process, perhaps inviting additional actors to join where appropriate. Countries that have existing local or regional groups may also want to engage those groups and build from there.

Composition of the Working Group

A multi-agency team of people who are stakeholders in children’s care and protection in a country is the most effective team to complete the Tracking Progress Tool. We recommend convening as balanced a Working Group as possible so that there is not overrepresentation of one agency or sector.

Different stakeholders could include:

- national government officials with responsibility for children and families
- other relevant ministries (such as Health, Education, and Justice);
- national and international NGOs;
- representatives of provincial or local government;
- representatives from relevant services (such as children and families, health, education, and justice); and
- community leaders.

The Working Group involved in completing Tracking Progress may wish to involve parents and children and community leaders during the process in some form– or develop a parallel process using individual themes and questions as starting points for discussion.

The Working Group should also include members with skill sets in the following areas:

- data analysis
- network contacts
- promoting the findings
- expertise in child rights and alternative care
- knowledge of, and familiarity with, the Alternative Care Guidelines

Size of the Working Group

Consideration should be given to the size of the Working Group so that it includes key stakeholders but is not so large that it inhibits participation. For larger countries with

many key stakeholders, you may want to consider establishing a number of Working Groups by region or sector or theme; with representatives from these groups participating in, and reporting back to, a Core Working Group and attending its meetings. In these instances, you may want to consider allowing each Working Group to enter data into its own version of the survey(s) and combining the completed survey responses from each Working Group into a final comprehensive report at the end (**See 'Entering Data'** for more information).

Choosing an Approach

Choosing an Approach

There are a few different choices for how your Working Group will approach the Tracking Tool. This Section of the Guide explains those approaches.

Stages of the Tool

The Tracking Progress Tool has **two primary stages** to gathering country-level data and evidence, as well as a final summary stage:

Part A: Overview

Overview of the alternative care system in your country. Answers to the questions in Part A will provide general insights and provide an introduction to the more detailed thematic areas.

Part B: Thematic Areas

In depth exploration of **thematic areas**. Each theme has **sub themes** that are divided into **general** and **detailed indicators**.

Part C: Final Summary*

Final notes on the alternative care system in your country and the results of the survey.

In terms of **entering data**, there are different options for a multi-agency team to answer the questions in the Tool:

- complete only Part A as a shorter exercise for a general overview
- complete Part A first and Part B at a later stage
- complete Parts A and B altogether, over a period of time

*Part C: Final Summary can be completed at the end of the process to help you summarize your findings.

Timeframe for Completing Tracking Progress

This measuring Tool is a web-based resource. It has been designed so that teams can work on completing it over a period of time, saving the data as they go along. Complete use of the Tool requires sufficient time spent in each of the **four primary phases** below:

1. **Preparing to use the tool (see ‘Building a Team’ and ‘Preparing to Use the Tool’)** – includes forming and convening the Working Group and planning how the questionnaires will be completed
2. **Entering data (see ‘Collaborating on the Tool’ and ‘Entering Data’)** – includes finding existing data to accurately and completely answer the questions in the Tool, validating that data, and identifying gaps in data
3. **Analysing data (see ‘Analysing and Comparing Data’)** – includes generating charts and graphs of quantitative data, reviewing qualitative data, and preparing a report of findings to draw greater understanding of children’s care in your country
4. **Using data (see ‘Advocating for Change’)** – includes presenting your Working Group’s findings, highlighting strengths and challenges in providing care for children and families, and using findings to inform a long-term care reform agenda

The process of using the Tool should be revisited at regular intervals. It is suggested that this should be:

- at least every 4 to 5 years as part of the reporting cycle to the **Committee on the Rights of the Child**, or
- every two years if a country is currently in the process of care reform.

Storing and Sharing Data

Data Storage & Sharing

The Tracking Tool is a web-based tool which uses an open-source survey software called LimeSurvey. The Tracking Progress Tool collects information through online surveys. Then the information is handled by a custom-made application to ease the collection of data, help users track their progress on complying to the Guidelines, and display their survey results.

Before you begin using the online tool, you will need to consider the implications for entering data into this online tool. This Section of the Guide presents the different options for storing and sharing the data you enter in the Tool and instructions for each. Before starting to use the online Tool, it is very important to understand and make decisions about:

- Types of installations for the Tool
- Where your data will be stored
- Who will have access to it
- Who it will be shared with
- Your internet access/connectivity

Types of installations

The Tracking Progress Tool can be used directly through the Global Installation or it can be used through a Local Installation. Each type of installation has important implications that must be understood before deciding how to proceed.

The installation type you choose can be changed at any point.

Global Installation

The Tracking Progress tool is already installed on a global server and is available to everyone who chooses a global installation. This server is supported by Better Care Network (BCN) and managed securely by a service provider in the USA. Using this installation means that there is no need to have a local IT team or servers to manage, and there are no costs associated with it. Using this installation, however, means that your data is located remotely and it can potentially be shared with others if you

authorize it. The data you have entered into the Tool can always be accessed by the Administrator (BCN), although access will not be sought without prior consent of the Working Group and will only be for management of the tool, not to access the content of the tool.

Local Installation

The tool is also available for download and to be installed on your own private server. For those who are working with limited internet access or poor connectivity, the local installation will be a better option as you will be able to use the Tool offline if you download it to your local network. A local IT team will need to handle the installation and management of the tool and your Working Group will need to determine the best way to maintain confidentiality of the data with the local IT team. Also, you will need a server to host the tool. Using this installation means that you have sole control over your data and the Tool at the local level and it cannot be shared with others in different countries. The recommended server requirements are as follows:

- LAMP server (Linux Apache MySQL PHP)
- Minimum 250 MB disk space
- MySQL 4.1.0 or later
- PHP 5.3 or later with the following modules/libraries enabled:
 - mbstring (Multibyte String Functions) extension library
 - PDO database driver for MySQL (pdo_mysql or pdo_mysql)
 - Also we assume in general that all PHP default libraries are enabled (like hash, session, etc.).

If you are interested in group collaboration, please speak with your IT manager to make sure all in your group have appropriate access.

Where will the data be stored?

Global Installation

The Tracking Progress Tool is installed on a global server. As such, the information will be stored on the premises of BCN's server host.

Local Installation

The Tool will be installed on your own private premises and the data will be stored on your premises.

Who will have access to the data?

Global Installation

If you have decided to use the global Tool, the information will be available to the Administrators of the Tool.

Local Installation

If you have chosen to use the Tool on your own local installation, the information will be available to the Administrators of your installation and any designated managers.

Who will the data be shared with?

Global Installation

While entering data in the Tool, you will be asked if you would like to share your information publicly. If so, your answers will be available to everyone through the "Compare Data" section.

Local Installation

While entering data in the Tool, you will be asked if you would like to share your information. If so, your answers will be available to everyone with access to the local installation through the "Compare Data" section.

Managing Users

Managing Users

The Tracking Progress Tool is an online Tool that can only be accessed with a username and password. In order to become familiar with the Tool and to begin using it, all members of the Working Group will need to obtain login information. This Section explains how to do this.

Creating a Username

In order to use the online Tool, including entering data in the survey sections and reviewing and analysing that data, you will need a username to login to the Tool. To create a username, contact the administrator of the Tool using the contact form. The administrator will email you with a username and password. Anyone can request a username, though this Tool is particularly designed to be used by those involved with implementing the Guidelines. Once you are sent your login information, you will be able to view each survey section and enter responses and use all the features of the Tool.

We recommend that every member of the Working Group request a username to access the Tool at, or before, the initial orientation of the Tool, before your Group begins its planning to complete the surveys (see ‘Preparing to Use the Tool’). This way, your Working Group will be able to use the Task Management feature (see ‘Collaborating on the Tool’) at the workshop to assign goals, tasks, and deadlines for completing the Tool.

Use the contact section or [click here](#) to request a username.

Creating a Working Group in the Tool

Creating or joining a Working Group will allow you to collaborate with other members of your country team on using the Tool. Members of the same Working Group can view

the data entered in the survey sections together and collaborate on collecting, entering, and following-up on data.

After receiving a message containing your username, you will be able to create a Working Group by contacting the administrator of the Tool and requesting a new Working Group. The user who issues the request to create a Working Group will be considered the “manager” of that Working Group. This user will have the ability to invite others to join the Working Group by contacting the administrator. The manager of the Group will most likely be a member of the lead facilitating team and most likely the person who is also entering the data into the Tool.

Use the contact section to create a Working Group or invite others to join your Working Group.

Joining a Working Group

If you would like to join an existing Working Group, contact the manager of that Working Group so that she or he may send a request to the Tool’s administrator to add you as a member.

Preparing to Use the Tool

Preparation for Completing Tracking Progress

The suggestions in this Section of the Guide have been devised to help with the organisation of the process for completing the Tracking Progress Tool and are informed by the initial testing of the tool. The testing process identified that **preparation** was essential for the successful completion of the tool. Most of the following activities, including planning and facilitating the workshop(s) will likely be done by the **lead agency or lead group**.

Stage 1: Pre-Workshop Orientation

To begin using the Tool, we recommend convening the Working Group at an **initial one-day meeting** to:

- review the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*;
- introduce the Tool and discuss how your Working Group will use it;
- login to the Tool using previously requested usernames and passwords; and
- allow Working Group members from different sectors and/or regions to meet and get to know one another, establishing group norms and dialogue.

You may consider providing a **brief orientation/training on the Guidelines for those who are not familiar or who need more information). One possible resource is the free massive online open course (MOOC): [‘Getting Care Right for All Children: Implementing the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.’](#)*

We recommend designing a workshop agenda that is engaging and interactive to help facilitate collaboration and cohesion amongst the Working Group. At this meeting, you may also decide to identify any data that can be collected in advance (refer to **‘Gathering Data’** for suggestions of information to collect prior to the meeting).

Stage 2: Planning a Workshop

Once the Working Group has been oriented, we recommend holding a **follow-up workshop** to plan how the Tool will be used and who will be responsible for identifying and collecting which data. To prepare for this meeting, we suggest that you:

- plan a **two-day face-to-face meeting** of main stakeholders to review the Tool and assign tasks;
- hold the meeting where **internet access** is available and with a screen to share information;
- identify what logistics and resources are needed in addition to computer access;
- identify **ways of coming to agreement** during the meeting;
- determine how to note where there are different views (for example: where there is an official government view or other community perspectives), recognising that different parts of the country may have different experiences;
- ensure access to resources such as the **Guidelines, UNCRC, Moving Forward** and any relevant national reports or evidence at the meeting;
- consider using **online conferencing** for maximising regional participation; and
- plan the workshop, if possible, as part of an annual review or other event in order to reduce costs.

Stage 3: At the Workshop

We recommend spending (at least) two days in a face-to-face meeting with the Working Group members to go through the questions in the surveys and decide how to collect the information needed to answer each question. You may find it useful at this workshop to divide the participants into four groups, assigning one group to each of the four thematic areas. In these smaller groups, the participants can decide amongst themselves who should be responsible for gathering the data to answer each question within that particular thematic area, and then present their plan back to the larger group in a plenary session for feedback.

For this in-person workshop, we suggest that you:

- develop a **plan for finding the data and inputting a response to each question** (see ‘Tool for Collaboration’ below for more information on a feature of the Tool that may aid you in your planning). This will include:
 - deciding **who will collect which data** (for example, government officials to collect statistics on care, NGO workers to collect relevant research or studies, etc);
 - determining **how it will be collated**;

- **noting potential gaps and weaknesses** in data and where data needs to be agreed;
- setting deadlines and timeline for inputting data into the survey, allowing enough time for this process so that data can be gathered over a period of time.
- invite multiple perspectives, including assigning more than one Working Group member to answer each question, where appropriate
- elect a small committee of Working Group members who will be responsible for reviewing and validating the data that Working Group members submit (consider setting up regular meetings for reviewing the data together)
- note which questions you may not be able to answer, for lack of data or other reason, and consider developing a plan to collect that data
- review terms and definitions to ensure understanding and consistency in survey responses, noting where local terminology may differ from that used in the Tool
- **record** who was involved and how the task was undertaken

After this in-person workshop, your Working Group should have a clear plan as to how the survey sections will be completed and the Working Group can then collaborate virtually, over a set period of time, to fill in the survey responses.

Tool for Collaboration

The Task Management feature of the Tool allows a Working Group to develop and collaborate on a plan for answering each question in the survey. Users in the Working Group will have access to the Task Management platform, in the 'Review & Analyse Data' section **after they have opened up a survey section** (i.e. open up 'Theme 1' in order to create a plan to answer the questions in Theme 1).

We recommend that your Working Group select one **"primary user"** who will be responsible for both **entering data into the Tool** and **creating the plan** on the task management platform (see '**Collaborating on the Tool**' for more information).

On this platform, the primary user(s) of the Working Group can set tasks and goals for each question during the data entry process, and other Working Group members will be able to view those goals and tasks, make comments on each question, and assign themselves or other users to each question. We recommend that the Working Group uses this feature during the planning workshop, **to assign responsibilities for collecting data** for survey responses.

The Task Manager allows you to collaborate on individual survey questions by:

- setting goals,
- assigning tasks to certain members of the Working Group,
- establishing timelines for follow-up and completion,
- leaving messages and comments for Working Group members,
- documenting progress made toward completion of tasks, and
- flagging priority questions.

How to Create a Task Management Plan

In order to use the Task Manager at the beginning of the process, the primary user of a given survey section must first open up the survey. To do this, click 'Use the Tool' > 'Enter Data' and choose a survey section to begin working on (either the Overview or one of the four Themes). Once the survey has been opened, the primary user will be able to access the Task Manager by clicking 'Use the Tool' > 'Review & Analyse Data' and clicking "Create a Plan" next to the corresponding survey section. Watch the tutorial video 'How to Create a Follow-Up Plan' for more information.

Gathering Data

Gathering Data

Once your Working Group has developed a plan for completing the Tool, you will need to identify the necessary data sources that have the information needed to answer the questions in the survey. This Section of the Guide provides an overview of the types of data and resources you may need.

Types of Data: Quantitative and Qualitative

To get a fully rounded picture of the situation in your country, it is important to include both quantitative and qualitative data when completing the tool.

Quantitative information is about quantities; it is information that can be measured and written down numerically, typically using absolute numbers or percentages. It usually comes from surveys or administrative records. Examples might include:

- numbers or percentages of children placed in different forms of alternative care;
- numbers or percentages of children not living with biological parents;
- numbers or percentages of children living in kinship care;
- numbers or percentages of children and families receiving support services

Qualitative information is about qualities; it is usually descriptive and includes the views and experiences of people. It often comes from sources such as interviews, focus group discussions, participatory activities, reports, and evaluation processes. Examples might include:

- The experiences and views of children on the reintegration process
- The experiences and views of families on the support services they receive
- The reasons why children end up in care
- Current legislation and its effectiveness
- The quality of the care and conditions in residential care settings

Sources of Evidence for Completing Tracking Progress

Sources of evidence (that will include quantitative and qualitative data) for completing the Tool should include the range of legislative, policy, research and other relevant documentation produced by governments, official independent agencies, inter-governmental agencies including UN and regional bodies, NGOs, academic institutions, faith based organisations, and others. Below is a list of potential sources of information. This can serve as a checklist to help identify information that is readily available. The list can also be used to identify data sources that could be developed where resources permit, through the collaboration of different agencies or other means.

For information regarding policy and legislation:

- National legislation and, where relevant, regional/provincial legislation, e.g. Children's Acts
- Policy guidance and regulations issued at national and regional/provincial levels as relevant, e.g. minimum standards, national guidelines
- Strategy documents from individual ministries or a combination of ministries
- Records of parliamentary proceedings on matters concerning children and families
- Documents on national standards, registration requirements and funding agreements

For quantitative information:

- National or regional statistics collected or collated by central government and, where relevant, by regional, provincial and local governments or by a credible agency
- National or regional censuses that contain information about children
- Representative household surveys e.g. Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) or Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)
- Numerical data from professional associations
- Numerical data from children's service organisations (and ministries where these services are run centrally), including family support services, foster care and residential care providers.

For qualitative information (note that some of the below may also include quantitative data):

- Inspection reports by official independent agencies concerned with the quality of care in children's agencies
- Formal reviews and investigations of children's services
- Situational analyses

- Evaluations of services or providers
- Evidence reviews
- Reports indicating the views of service users including children, young people and families
- Reports by states and non-governmental organisations to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and other international and regional human rights treaty bodies
- Reports to, or by, other intergovernmental organisations such as the United Nations (UN), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Union (EU) etc.
- Reports by key national, international or local NGOs and faith based organisations
- Reliable or trustworthy media reports or outputs that can be validated as accurate.
- Academic research reports
- Court rulings
- Professional knowledge, informed opinion, and expert consultations*
- Training and education curricula materials

** Useful insights can come from consulting with as wide a range of experts as possible, on a one-off or repeated basis. Experts may include policy makers at national and regional levels, heads of large children's services, representatives from NGOs, professional groups, service users, youth organisations, relevant researchers and educators/trainers as well as children and their families. Consultation can be carried out by means of events, focus group discussions and/or obtaining views individually.*

Quality of Evidence

For each question in the Tool, you are asked to provide the source of evidence. Ideally, sources of evidence should be accurate and, whenever possible, independently verified. However, it is recognised that in many countries, a limited range of information is available, some of which may be partial or of uncertain reliability. Where the reliability of the data is uncertain or questionable, this should be noted. Below are the key things to consider when assessing the quality of the data and to include in the Tool when explaining the source of the data:

- **Source of evidence:** Which organisation(s) gathered the data? Does the data come from a reputable body such as a university, specialist research agency or research unit within a larger organization?
- **Type of information:** What is the type of information (e.g. ministerial decree, national legislation, guidance, research, case study, survey data, etc)?
- **Methodology:** What methodology was used to collect the data? Is it the most appropriate method for the type of data being collected?

- **Limitations of the data:** What are the limitations of the data? Does the data source discuss the limitations of the data?
- **Timeframe:** How recently has the data been gathered and is it gathered regularly? Is information available for more than one point in time to show trends and changes?
- **Geographical coverage:** Does the data cover the whole country or only certain geographical areas?
- **Population range and inclusion:** Does the data include all children and families or are there restrictions by age, gender, ethnicity, faith, special needs such as disability or other circumstances like poverty?
- **Disaggregation:** Has the data been disaggregated by relevant categories such as age, gender, ethnicity, faith, special needs such as disability or other circumstances like poverty?
- Does the data cover something that is being piloted or is part of a developing programme, rather than something that is widely available? It can be helpful to identify examples of good practice that could be made more widely available.
- **Children and families' perspectives:** To what extent have children and families' views been gathered and engaged with? How representative are such views? Do they include children of different ages and circumstances?

Gaps in Knowledge

One of the benefits of completing the Tracking Progress Tool is that stakeholders will get a better understanding of what evidence is available, as well as what evidence is missing. After completing the surveys, those who have been involved in the process can consider how to improve data collection and how this can be taken forward.

Working Groups are encouraged to use the Tool as an assessment of data availability in their country and can use the Task Management feature (see '**Collaborating on the Tool**') to set goals and tasks for further data collection.

Collaborating on the Tool

Collaborating on the Tool

Completing the Tracking Progress Tool is a group effort and will involve coordination and collaboration. This Section offers suggestions on working together as a group as you enter data and use this Tool.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Working Group

Every user of the Tool with a username and password will have the ability to enter responses into the survey sections. **However, two or more users cannot enter responses into the same survey form.** Therefore, as described in ‘**Planning to Use the Tool,**’ we recommend selecting one user to input all of the responses in a given survey form. Otherwise, you may end up with multiple versions of the same survey (which *would* be useful if you wish to produce a shadow report). Your group may elect the manager of the Working Group, or any other member of the group, to be the primary user.

Please note that the primary user will be responsible for coordinating Working Group members, receiving data submitted by Working Group members, and entering all the data into the survey. It is a significant undertaking and **should be taken on by someone will sufficient time to dedicate to the role.** For more information on the role of the primary user and how to work together as a group to use this Tool, see ‘**Collaborating on the Tool.**’

With that in mind, your Working Group may also consider choosing **a different user to be responsible for inputting data for each survey section (i.e. one user inputs data into the Overview, another user inputs data into Theme 1, another is the primary user for Theme 2, and so on).** Other users in the Working Group who are not the primary user will not input data directly into the survey itself, but they will be able to view the survey and the responses that have been entered by the primary user.

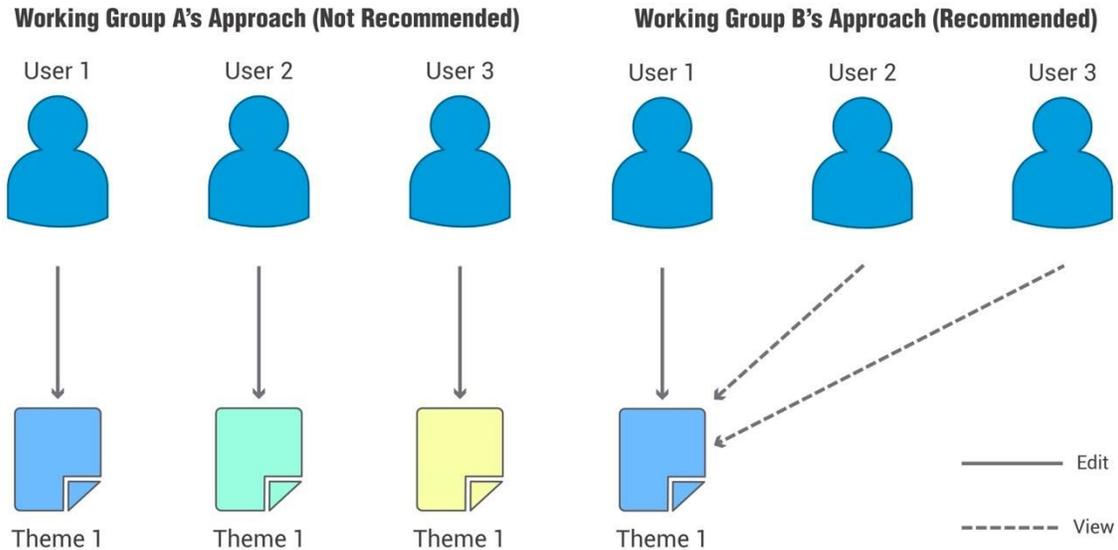


Figure 1: Working Group A has three different versions of Theme 1.
 Working Group B has designated User 1 as its primary user.
 User 1 is entering the data into the Theme 1 section of the survey and the other users can view.
 This is the recommended approach for completing the survey.

All members of the Working Group will be responsible for: helping to gather the data necessary to answer the questions, reviewing the data entered, analysing the data, and/or performing other tasks as laid out in the plan your Working Group has developed (see **'Planning to Use the Tool'**).

Additionally, Working Groups who have used the Tool have found it useful to elect a **small committee** of a few Working Group members **to review and validate the data** as Working Group members submit it.

How to Use the Task Manager to Enter Data

The primary user will be responsible for creating and managing the task management "Plan" for a given survey form. The remaining members of the Working Group who are not the primary user(s) will be able to submit data through the Task Management feature. To collaborate on completing the survey, Working Group members can submit data to be entered in the survey form by posting it in the comments of each question in the task management plan. The primary user can then copy those responses and paste them into the survey. Users can also use the Task Manager to assign themselves to questions and primary users can set deadlines and flag questions for priority.

Entering Data

Entering Data

This Section of the Guide explains how to enter responses to the survey questions. This includes a description of the structure of the Tool, suggestions for responding to the questions that will streamline future data analysis, and explanations of other features of the Tool that will aid in the process.

Structure of the Tool

To successfully complete the Tool, it is helpful to have an understanding of its structure.

Part A: Overview

Overview of the alternative care system in your country. Answers to the questions in Part A will provide general insights and provide an introduction to the more detailed thematic areas, which are covered in Part B.

Part B: Thematic Areas

In depth exploration of four thematic areas. Each theme has sub themes that are divided into general and detailed indicators.

Theme 1: Addressing the factors that may lead to the need for formal alternative care

- Sub Theme 1. Supporting children and their families
- Sub Theme 2. Alternative care as part of a national framework
- Sub Theme 3. Financing care
- Sub Theme 4. Strengths and progress

Theme 2: Discouraging the use of formal alternative care unless necessary

- Sub Theme 1. Gatekeeping systems
- Sub Theme 2. Assessment, planning and reviewing of placements
- Sub Theme 3. Reintegration, leaving care and after care preparation and support
- Sub Theme 4. Informal care
- Sub Theme 5. Strengths and progress

Theme 3: Ensuring formal alternative care meets minimum standards

- Sub Theme 1. National standards
- Sub Theme 2. Human resources
- Sub Theme 3. Mandatory registration and authorisation systems
- Sub Theme 4. Inspection and oversight mechanisms
- Sub Theme 5. Strengths and progress

Theme 4: Ensuring that formal alternative care settings meet the best interests of the individual child

- Sub Theme 1. Formal alternative care options
- Sub Theme 2. Formal family-based alternative care
- Sub Theme 3. Residential care
- Sub Theme 4. De-institutionalising the alternative care system
- Sub Theme 5. Care for children outside their country of habitual residence
- Sub Theme 6. Care for children in emergency situations
- Sub Theme 7. Strengths and progress

Themes and Sub-Themes

The questions in the Tool are organized in such a way that related questions will be grouped together. Each theme of the Tool has **sub-themes**, which are labeled at the top of each page of questions. Each sub-theme relates to a different part of the Guidelines on the Alternative Care of Children, which will be often referenced at the top of the page. Moving to a new page of questions means that you are moving to a new sub-theme. Furthermore, most of the questions within each sub-theme are arranged in **clusters**, with one primary question (i.e. Q12) and a series of follow-up questions (i.e. Question 12.a., Q12.b., and so on).

How to Enter the Data

Moving Through the Questions

Each question in the survey tool prompts you to provide information about the alternative care of children in your country. Choose a section of the survey to begin with (see '**Choosing an Approach**') and enter your responses based on the data your Working Group has previously gathered. Do your best to answer the questions in order, as many questions build upon, or reference, the previous question in the survey.

Depending on your response to a particular question, you may also be prompted to respond to a follow-up question, or to provide more details regarding a certain response. Additionally, some data entry fields will be unlocked only if you've selected an answer to a previous question. If you feel there is not sufficient opportunity to provide details or explanation in a particular question, read on to the following questions as space will typically be provided to give details in a follow-up question.

How to Respond if the Data is Missing

If you do not have the information needed to respond to the survey question accurately, you may respond in one of two ways. We recommend selecting, or writing in, "**Don't know**" if you have searched for the information to answer the question and **the data does not exist or cannot be found**. By staying consistent with selecting or writing "Don't know" as you progress through the Tool, it will be easier for you to filter and organize your data once you have completed each survey section. You will be able to download all of your responses in an Excel file and use the Excel software to search or filter for all questions for which you have entered a "Don't Know" answer, providing a list of the missing data on care.

We recommend selecting, or writing in, "**No answer**" if you believe the data may exist and **you intend to return to that question at a later time**. After choosing or writing "No Answer," you will be able to collaborate with your Working Group to identify the missing information in the Task Manager under the 'Review & Analyse Data' section.

Giving Additional Information

The more detailed and evidence-rich your responses are, the more comprehensive your final report will be. A paperclip icon is included in each question which allows you

to list and/or upload the data source used to answer the question, make comments about the data source (i.e. if you have used relevant research or demographic data to answer the question, or if you have used personal experience and anecdotal evidence), note where local terms and definitions may differ from those used in the Tool, and add any other relevant information, such as an existing table of disaggregated data.

The more information your Working Group can provide, the better. This may include additional details not necessarily requested in the survey and/or multiple perspectives and data sources in a given response, where appropriate. Be sure to use the paperclip icon to note the data source (including any limitations of that data source) and provide explanation wherever possible. See **'Gathering Data'** for more information.

Finishing the Survey

You will be able to save your responses and leave the survey at any time, to return to it later. You will also be able to begin a new form if you have made a mistake or want to start over. At the end of the survey, you will be asked to confirm whether you would like to share your data publicly, with only your Working Group, or if you would like to keep your entries private.

Returning to Your Survey

As you go through a survey form, you can save your responses and revisit them at any time. To review or update your survey responses, click on 'Review & Analyse Data' in the menu under 'Use the Tool.' The primary user will be able to add, edit, or update survey responses. Other Working Group members will be able to view the survey responses entered by the primary user. You can also visit this page to generate and print a PDF or Excel file of your survey responses, create tables and graphs of the quantitative data you have entered, and access the Task Management platform.

Analysing and Comparing Data

Analysing and Comparing Data

Once you have entered data into the Tool, it will be necessary for your Working Group, or a particular committee within the Working Group, to analyse the information you've entered in the Tool in order to produce an **evidence-based summary of findings**. This can then be used to determine what steps need to be taken to improve alternative care and implementation of the Guidelines in your country.

The Tracking Tool includes some features to help you analyse and collate your data, and to compare your data with that shared by other Working Groups in other countries if you so choose. This Section of the Guide offers suggestions on how to use those features.

Analysing Data

On the 'Review & Analyse Data' page, under the 'Action' column, you will see several icons that allow you to either return to a survey, print or download a PDF file of your survey responses, download an Excel file of your survey responses, or generate charts from the data you've entered. Using the downloaded Excel file of your survey responses, your Working Group can begin analysing the information you've entered into the Tool.

It should be noted that the record produced when downloading a PDF file of your survey responses provides only a list of all the answers you've entered in the questionnaires; it is likely to be long, with some repetition, and it does not allow you the option to sort through your data very efficiently. **Downloading the record as an Excel file**, on the other hand, enables you to better organise, examine, filter, and analyse your

data as you see fit. (i.e. using the Excel software to filter for all of the questions for which you have entered “Don’t Know” will help you identify many of the gaps in data on children’s care in your country).

For analysis of **quantitative data**, you can use the charts icon on the ‘Review & Analyse Data’ page, which allows you to analyse and compare data entered into the quantitative questions in the survey. When clicking on the charts icon, you will be able to choose individual questions to analyse. Here, you can generate bar, pie, or column charts of the data you have entered for those questions.

Comparing Data

If you choose to share your survey responses publicly, you will also be able to compare your data with the data that other users of the Tool in different countries have agreed to share publicly. Visit the ‘Compare Data’ page and choose a particular survey section to explore. Here, you can filter for particular questions and responses and generate a table or Excel file comparing the questions you have selected across all publicly shared surveys, with the option to filter for only those that match a particular response.

Advocating for Change

Advocating for Change

Once your Working Group has implemented the Tracking Tool, you should have a great deal of information on the care of children in your country. This information will include qualitative and quantitative data on the children in care, or at risk thereof, as well as the policies and practices in place, the capacity of the social service workforce and other systems, and other key information that will demonstrate both the strengths of your country's care system, as well as the areas in which the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children are not being fully implemented. Furthermore, this process will also help your Working Group identify where data are missing and areas where further research is needed.

Developing a Report

We recommend that your Working Group develop a report presenting your findings from the Tracking Tool and highlighting the strengths and challenges identified and your group's analysis of the learning generated from the process of using this Tool. (See '**Analysing & Comparing Data**' for more information).

Validating the Report

Previous Working Groups have convened a wider audience to validate the reports they have produced, presenting the findings to a variety of actors from government, the NGO sector, and more. Your Working Group may choose to do the same or find another way to gain larger agreement and verification from additional actors in the field.

Using the Report to Advocate for Change

The report that your Working Group develops can be presented to the relevant government Ministry or other key decision-makers to highlight to them the areas in which your country needs to improve its implementation of the Guidelines in order to better serve the needs of children and families, particularly those most vulnerable. Your Working Group, therefore, should be strategic in how the report is presented, what findings are highlighted, and the recommendations you make.