

# Alternatives: Learning What Works & Why

## Monitoring and evaluation of alternatives to immigration detention

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### KEY POINTS

- Evaluation is an opportunity to learn about what works and why
- Integrating M&E from the start of a program will enable continuous improvements through informed program development
- Independent evaluations usually result in more rigorous and authoritative insights

Alternatives to immigration detention are more likely to replace immigration detention if they are affordable, effective and humane. To monitor and evaluate a program's ability to meet these goals, consider some of the following factors:

- Costs include day-to-day operations, capital expenditure, reduction in litigation, and savings from independent departures
- Compliance includes staying engaged in migration procedures, and independent departure rates for refused cases
- Health and wellbeing can be monitored by standardised quantitative assessments, or through qualitative self-assessment reports

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This briefing paper outlines the areas to consider when developing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for alternatives to immigration detention. Migration authorities need evidence about what interventions work – and why – in order to implement or expand alternatives to detention. Monitoring and evaluation is key to building that evidence base.

Currently, many organisations – including governments – do not undertake or publish monitoring and evaluation of their alternative to detention programs. Given this is such a complex area of policy, improved monitoring and evaluation will be crucial for building understanding and learning that can lead to better programs.

The paper starts with an overview of monitoring and evaluation, highlighting the value of developing an M&E framework early in the process. This includes identifying the goals of the intervention, and tailoring the M&E framework to be able to assess how well the intervention is meeting those goals.

The paper then outlines the monitoring data that may need to be collected in order to evaluate the key goals of cost, compliance, and health and wellbeing. It concludes by providing short case studies of evaluations of alternative to detention programs in the United Kingdom, Malaysia, the United States, Mexico and Europe.



## I. INTRODUCING MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation is a structured process to assess an intervention's outcomes against the intended goals. There are two separate but interrelated elements in this process. **Monitoring** is the continuous collection of a set of information regarding the implementation of an intervention. The information collected during monitoring provides a foundation for evaluation. **Evaluation** is an intensive, time-bound process in which an evaluator combines the monitoring information with additional data to assess an intervention against set goals. Evaluation can occur from time-to-time throughout the life of a program to inform program improvement, and as a structured review process upon program completion.

There are several benefits in using M&E to inform program delivery. M&E provides a structured learning process that can inform continuous program development, making it more likely the program will achieve its intended outcomes. M&E can also provide accountability to funders. Importantly, well-implemented M&E can generate knowledge about good practices that can inform the design of similar programs in new settings, or in scaling up programs to larger systems.

## II. DEVELOPING AN M&E FRAMEWORK

An M&E Framework builds from the program theory and goals to develop a set of evaluation questions and performance indicators. Such a framework maps the program's interventions against their intended results, and sets out the data needed to determine whether the activities are creating beneficial results.

The key tasks in developing and implementing an M&E Framework, as identified by the Better Evaluation<sup>1</sup> network, are as follows:

1. Decide how the M&E process will be managed, including clarifying stakeholders, roles and decision-making processes
2. Develop a description of what is to be evaluated and how it is understood to work
3. Frame the boundaries of the evaluation including its purpose, the key evaluation questions and the criteria and standards to be used

4. Collect data so you can describe the program's activities, its outcomes or results, and the context in which it was implemented
5. Analyse the data to understand the causes of the outcomes and impacts
6. Combine and synthesise the data from one or more evaluations to form an overall assessment of the benefits of the intervention
7. Report on the findings to the intended users of the evaluation, and support them to make use of findings moving forward.

There are some good practices to consider when developing an M&E framework, particularly for alternatives to detention. These include:

- Where possible, tender and recruit an external evaluator to be involved in the development and implementation of an M&E Framework from the beginning, in order to benefit from the expertise and insights of an independent actor
- Design the M&E framework alongside program development or at the start of the program, to ensure learnings can inform program implementation and improvement
- Involve program implementers in designing the framework and the questions to be addressed
- Consult key stakeholders about their main concerns and priorities, including what they would need to know to approve or fund program expansion
- Consult people with experience of the migration system about their priorities for an effective and humane alternative to detention
- Establish baseline information on compliance, health and wellbeing
- For pilot programs, develop the framework to include an assessment of the scope for scalability

There are many different M&E methodologies available.<sup>2</sup> This briefing does not recommend a particular methodology, but rather outlines a set of areas to consider when designing an M&E framework. It builds on the IDC's body of research on alternatives to detention.<sup>3</sup> That research was undertaken to understand what interventions can be used instead of immigration detention while still achieving successful outcomes. The aim was to set out the actions governments can take to ensure detention is only applied as a last resort, and only in exceptional cases. That research drew on the learning from evaluations of alternatives in many

<sup>1</sup> This information was originally published by BetterEvaluation.org, an international collaboration to improve evaluation practice and theory by sharing information about evaluation options and approaches. Their resources are available online at [www.betterevaluation.org](http://www.betterevaluation.org) and are available in French, English, Portuguese, German and Arabic.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview visit: <http://www.betterevaluation.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Sampson, Robyn, Vivienne Chew, Grant Mitchell, and Lucy Bowring. 2015. *There are alternatives: A handbook for preventing unnecessary immigration detention (Revised)*. Melbourne: International Detention Coalition. Available at: <https://idcoalition.org/publication/there-are-alternatives-revised-edition/>



different countries and with many different migrant and refugee groups. The result was the Community Assessment and Placement model – or the CAP model – which explains which interventions produce optimal results when managing a person in a community setting.

### IDENTIFYING WHO IS GOING TO USE THE INFORMATION AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE

It is important to assess from the beginning who wants the evaluation information and how they will need to use that information. The users may include migration authorities, other government authorities, politicians, civil society groups, funding bodies, migrant and refugee communities, advocates, service providers or human rights bodies. Each of these groups will likely want to know different information. The information may be used to improve programs during implementation; to ensure compliance with national legislation and international human rights obligations; to persuade key stakeholders of the value of the alternative; to demonstrate the value of investment to funders; or to build the wider knowledge-base on alternatives to be applied in other contexts. Importantly, evaluation is an opportunity to learn.

### III. IDENTIFYING THE GOALS TO EVALUATE

It is important to identify the goals of the intervention, and to tailor the M&E process to assess the success of the intervention in meeting those goals. The IDC has found that governments are more likely to reduce immigration detention if the alternatives proposed are **affordable, effective and humane**. These three goals integrate a government's responsibilities to govern migration, with their responsibilities to avoid harming the health and wellbeing of migrants.

In an M&E framework, the high-level evaluation questions relating to these goals are:

- Does the intervention **cost** the same or less than detention?
- Does the intervention achieve acceptable levels of **compliance**?
- Does the intervention maintain **health and wellbeing**?

An alternative to detention will often have additional goals that are specific to the context, population or purpose of the alternative to detention, which should be included in an M&E framework. For example, a program for unaccompanied children should include the goals of meeting the best interests of the child, establishing protection needs, and of seeking family reunification.

Alternatives may reduce the detention of a vulnerable group, or contribute to reducing the size of the detention estate. In contrast, there is a risk that an alternative to detention contributes to expanding the number of people living under government surveillance and intervention measures (sometimes referred to as 'net-widening'). Despite these important considerations, it is rare to be able to evaluate impact on detention rates within most program timeframes, particularly in the case of pilots that may be developed in a broader context of expanding use of detention. Such assessment sits with evaluations of systems change strategies, or with whole-of-system monitoring and evaluation.<sup>4</sup>

### IV. ASSESSING COST

Immigration authorities must implement policies within a set budget. For this reason, authorities need to know the cost of different interventions relative to their outcomes. There are a number of different costs associated with alternatives to detention that may need to be integrated into an M&E framework – the key elements are outlined below.<sup>5</sup>

#### RUNNING COSTS PER-PERSON-PER-DAY

The most commonly reported expenditure for alternatives is the running costs on a per-person-per-day basis. This form of costing is then compared with the costs of holding a person in immigration detention. It must be clear which operational expenses are included in the calculation of such figures, as these vary considerably depending on the services and supports provided. Running costs may include, among others, the costs of accommodation, food, property maintenance, medical care, support staff and security.

There are occasions when a simple comparison of day-to-day running costs do not show lower running costs in the community. This can occur when detention running costs are low due to substandard conditions, in particular where a vulnerable group (such as unaccompanied minors) requires more support than they had received in detention.

<sup>4</sup> An example of a whole-of-system assessment, including a comparison of rates of alternatives versus detention, can be seen in the country reports in UNHCR. 2019. *Beyond detention: Progress report 2018*. Geneva: UNHCR. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5c9354074.html>

<sup>5</sup> A costs comparison can be found in Sampson et al. 2015. *There are alternatives*. pp. 11-12.



## COSTS OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Daily running costs often fail to capture capital expenditure costs. Capital expenditure is the investment required to purchase, build, re-purpose or furnish facilities. In this area of costing, the capital expenditure of establishing immigration detention buildings and facilities are compared with the figures for accommodation facilities in the community. Some alternatives do not require large investments to build new infrastructure, as people may be able to live with relatives, fund their own independent housing, or be referred to existing support facilities. Many government-run alternatives make use of repurposed dis-used properties, such as old army barracks, for accommodation.

It can be difficult to find the financial information required to make these comparisons. The figures may be published in the financial reports of relevant government departments, requested through national freedom of information laws, or elicited through spending oversight mechanisms.

## COSTING A REDUCTION IN THE RATE OF REVIEW OF NEGATIVE DECISIONS

Engagement-based alternatives that ensure the person has the correct information and support to understand and participate in their migration or asylum case have been shown to improve outcomes by reducing the rate of review of negative decisions. This is because those who have been well-informed throughout the process and believe it has been a fair assessment of their situation and claims are more willing to accept a negative outcome.

More sustainable negative decisions that result in a lower rate of appeals will avoid the legal and administrative costs associated with decision reviews.<sup>6</sup> This data can be collected along with other case information, in order to be able to compare review rates for those in the alternative versus detention.

## COSTING INDEPENDENT DEPARTURE VERSUS DEPORTATION

A key benefit of alternatives to detention can be the increase in independent departures for refused cases, with a corresponding reduction in enforced deportations. Deportation is much more expensive than independent departures due to the additional staffing and security requirements, both within the country and during return journeys.

<sup>6</sup> Examples of such savings are reported in: Aspden, Jane. 2008. *Evaluation of the Solihull Pilot for the United Kingdom Border Agency and the Legal Services Commission*. London: UKBA and LSC. Retrieved from <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4c62615e2.html>; Siulc, Nina, Zhifen Cheng, Arnold Son, and Olga Byrne. 2008. *Legal orientation program: Evaluation and performance and outcome measurement report, Phase II*. New York: Vera Institute for Justice. Retrieved from: <http://www.vera.org/pubs/legal-orientation-program-evaluation-and-performance-and-outcome-measurement-report-phase-ii>

While such data can be difficult to find in public records, it may be found in annual reports of migration departments, independent audit reports, company reports, or elicited via questions of departmental officials during government oversight processes.

## COSTS OF LITIGATION AND COMPENSATION PAYOUTS

Many governments have been required to defend their use of immigration detention in court. These have included cases regarding unlawful use of detention, rights violations of those detained, compensation for individuals who have been harmed by detention, and compensation to traumatized staff.<sup>7</sup> The costs of defending such cases include legal representation, court time, and compensation claims.

This data would most likely be available as retrospective data on previous court cases involving immigration detention. Published court decisions sometimes include information on compensation levels and legal costs. Settlements are sometimes subject to confidentiality clauses, in which case estimates or alternative data sources such as freedom of information requests may be required.

## ADDITIONAL COSTS

There may be additional costs that may be incorporated in the evaluation framework. For example, immigration detention can place additional burdens on the health care system because it creates poorer health for the people detained. This harm can create health issues both during detention and after release.<sup>8</sup> In severe cases, immigration detention can impact a person in such a way to reduce their independence and employability post-release. While these costs are incredibly difficult to calculate, naming them clarifies that the cost of detention is always underestimated.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Examples can be found at: IDC. 2018. "Unlawful detention: Expensive mistakes for government" <https://idcoalition.org/news/unlawful-detention-expensive-mistake-governments/> and Sampson et al. 2015. *There are alternatives*. p. 12

<sup>8</sup> Coffey, Guy J., Ida Kaplan, Robyn C. Sampson, and Maria Montagna Tucci. 2010. "The meaning and mental health consequences of long-term immigration detention for people seeking asylum." *Social Science & Medicine* 70 (12):2070-2079; von Werthern, M., K. Robjant, Z. Chui, R. Schon, L. Ottisova, C. Mason, and C. Katona. 2018. "The impact of immigration detention on mental health: a systematic review." *BMC Psychiatry*, 18(1), 382. doi:10.1186/s12888-018-1945-y; Zwi, Karen, Sarah Mares, Dania Nathanson, Alvin Kuowei Tay, and Derrick Silove. 2017. "The impact of detention on the social-emotional wellbeing of children seeking asylum: A comparison with community-based children." *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. doi: 10.1007/s00787-017-1082-z.

<sup>9</sup> For example, an Australian study calculated the lifetime health costs of detention-related trauma, estimating that these costs are 50% more than average health costs per person. Ward, Tony. 2011. *Long-term health costs of extended mandatory detention of asylum seekers*. Melbourne: Yarra Institute for Religion and Social Policy.



### Costs

- Consider which costs are relevant
- Assess which cost data can be obtained
- Identify how unobtainable costs can be estimated from other sources or reasonable comparisons
- Plan how to capture cost data from the alternative to detention program

## V. ASSESSING COMPLIANCE

There are at least two distinct sets of data that relate to the goal of compliance within immigration systems. The first relates to whether a person remains engaged with immigration authorities during the processing of their migration or asylum claims. The second set of data relates to whether a person accepts a negative outcome on their claims and undertakes an independent departure from the country. It is important to clarify which of these data is relevant to the intervention being evaluated.

### STAYING ENGAGED IN THE MIGRATION PROCESS

Many governments are concerned about non-citizens who are living in the country without legal status and are intentionally avoiding immigration control. Some alternatives to detention are designed to include monitoring of ongoing engagement with the program, and/or with immigration authorities.

When calculating and presenting absconding rates, it is important to clearly define the circumstances that are considered to demonstrate 'absconding'. Authorities often assess absconding as failure to participate in monitoring activities (such as in-person reporting or check-in calls) or to provide certain information (such as registering a new address). An M&E framework may establish its own definition or threshold for absconding, where official definitions are so broad as to be of limited value in assessing actual compliance. For example, some authorities consider a person to have 'absconded' if they miss one scheduled reporting event, even if there is a valid reason such as illness.

An evaluation is an important opportunity to try to understand the reasons people either abscond or remain engaged with support programs and with migration authorities. Relevant factors that can influence compliance include stage of migration process, anticipated length of time until case resolution, ability to access required support and meet basic needs, overall migration goals, local family or community ties, compliance to date, and levels of understanding and trust in the process.<sup>10</sup>

Qualitative data can include self-reporting from program participants about their own sense of their ability to engage and participate in the migration process. It can also include analytical reflections by case workers on each person's willingness and ability to engage in the migration process, as well as the factors thought to be influencing this. Such data can be elicited by case managers during intake and assessment interviews, and recorded in case notes.

### COMPLIANCE WITH DEPARTURE ORDERS (INDEPENDENT DEPARTURE RATES)

A different set of data is required to monitor and evaluate compliance with an order to depart the country. This data is collected by monitoring the case to the point of departure, whether this involves departure for a country of origin or citizenship, departure for a country of traditional residence, or departure for a third country. Many governments can access this data from departure records, although some governments do not keep departure records. Non-governmental organisations must monitor departures through less formal reporting and *ad hoc* information collection. In the case of return support programs, the program may include post-return assessment and support that can inform this element of evaluation.

### Compliance

- Consider what compliance data is relevant
- Consider whether departure data is important for this alternative
- Consult stakeholders on their key questions regarding compliance
- Plan how to capture compliance data

## VI. ASSESSING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The third major area of monitoring and evaluation is health and wellbeing. This is important for the people living in the alternative to detention, but can also serve as a useful proxy indicator for how well alternatives meet the person's needs and fulfil their basic rights as compared with detention. This can be measured through both quantitative and qualitative data.

There are many quantitative tools available to measure health and wellbeing. Some require a medically-trained professional, while others can be self-administered or implemented by case managers. An example of the latter is the World Health Organization's Quality of Life Survey, which is an internationally-recognised, validated cross-cultural health measurement tool. It asks a set of

<sup>10</sup> Sampson et al. 2015. *There are alternatives* pp. 42-45.



questions that together measure the four domains of physical, mental, social and environmental quality of life. It has been implemented with a wide range of populations, including to compare the wellbeing of detainees with that of their counterparts living in the community.<sup>11</sup>

Qualitative descriptions of health and wellbeing can be used to complement quantitative measures, or be used as a stand-alone assessment by program participants. Self-reporting can provide important insights into the perceived state of health, and the reasons for distress or deterioration. These descriptive sources of data assist in understanding, rather than measuring, the experience of an alternative to detention program from the point of view of the individual.<sup>12</sup> Importantly, health and wellbeing data must be recorded, collated and reported in a de-identified manner, to ensure confidentiality.

#### Health and wellbeing

- Consider what health and wellbeing data is relevant
- Establish base-line figures for participants' health and wellbeing upon entering the program
- Consult stakeholders on their key questions regarding health and wellbeing
- Consult migrants and communities about their key concerns and priorities
- Plan how to capture health and wellbeing data

## VII. EVALUATION CASE STUDIES

As flagged earlier, there are a diversity of methodologies for undertaking monitoring and evaluation that cannot be reviewed in detail here.<sup>13</sup> In this section, we provide several examples of monitoring and/or evaluation of alternatives to detention in a range of contexts. These examples include both government- and NGO-run programs, as well as both external and internal evaluations.

### FAMILY RETURNS PROCESS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In 2011, the United Kingdom introduced a Family Returns Process. The process was developed to implement the government's 2010 announcement that they intended to end the detention of children.

The aims of the process are to:

- Increase family take up of voluntary return and Assisted Voluntary Return
- Ensure that any enforcement action takes into account the welfare interests of children and the wider family
- Better prepare families for return and give them the opportunity to take responsibility for their return
- Give families the opportunity to make further representations and seek judicial reviews before enforcement action commences.

The Family Returns Process consists of three stages, with an established escalation procedure when initial options fail to promote the desired outcomes.<sup>14</sup>

The final option is "ensured return" which is a form of enforced departure, or deportation, that must be approved by the Independent Family Returns Panel. This panel consists of a group of medical and child safeguarding experts.

In 2013, an independent evaluation was commissioned by the Home Office to identify the extent to which the program's aims were being fulfilled.<sup>15</sup> The evaluation incorporated three strands of data collection: a review of management information (including all family case files up to October 2012); interviews, a survey, and focus groups with program staff and key stakeholders; and interviews with families in the program.

The evaluation identified several positive outcomes including a positive impact on family welfare and safeguarding children, that the majority of families complied with the process, and that almost half of the families who returned did so voluntarily. The evaluation also identified areas for improvement including that voluntary returns had not increased as much as anticipated, that returns were taking longer and taking more resources than under previous processes, and that staff felt they needed more training and support.

<sup>11</sup> Steel, Zachary, Derrick Silove, Robert Brooks, Shakeh Momartin, Bushra Alzuhairi, and Ina Susljik. 2006. "Impact of immigration detention and temporary protection on the mental health of refugees." *British Journal of Psychiatry* 188:58-64.

<sup>12</sup> A good example of this is found in Costello, Cathryn and Ezra Kaytaz. 2013. *Building empirical evidence into alternatives to detention: Perceptions of asylum-seekers and refugees in Toronto and Geneva*. Geneva: UNHCR.

<sup>13</sup> For an overview visit: <http://www.betterevaluation.org/>

<sup>14</sup> Full details are available in: United Kingdom Home Office. 2017. *Family Returns Process (FRP) v 3.0*. Retrieved 22.03.2017 at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/597380/Family-returns-process-v3\\_0.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/597380/Family-returns-process-v3_0.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Lane, Mike, Daniel Murray, Terry Smith, Jon Jones, Evelyn Hichen, Victoria Richardson, et al. 2013. *Evaluation of the new family returns process*. London: Home Office. Retrieved 23.06.2017 at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/264658/horr78.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/264658/horr78.pdf)



The evaluation findings were used to inform program development. Ongoing internal program improvement strategies included: an internal 'learning grid' to log questions and answers, and to report on any resulting program changes; a regular newsletter; and guidance notes for staff. The evaluation also identified the potential for greater dissemination of learning by the Independent Family Returns Panel.

The Panel has published reports on program implementation in 2012<sup>16</sup>, 2014<sup>17</sup> and 2016.<sup>18</sup> These reports analyse statistical data regarding participation and return rates during the reporting period, and provide recommendations for program improvements based on the panel members' participation in, and observation of, the program implementation.

Using this approach, the program has maintained steady improvement in outcomes over time: in 2011-12, only 51% of family departures from the UK were undertaken without the need for an ensured return<sup>19</sup> but by 2014-2016 this had reached 97% of families who left the country. In its most recent report, the Panel concluded:

...the data reflects that more families are entering the family returns process and as a proportion many more are returning to their country of origin without the need for an ensured return. Also, more are going home voluntarily and with assistance.<sup>20</sup>

The focus on applying learnings for program improvement has resulted in a community-based alternative for children operating at scale with positive outcomes sustained over many years.

## ALTERNATIVE CARE FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN IN MALAYSIA

In 2015, a Malaysian NGO established a Community Placement and Case Management Program for Unaccompanied and Separated Children. The program uses a holistic case management approach centred around child well-being, safety,

permanency and case resolution. The program facilitates placement in foster care, kinship care or independent living arrangements as a key component of support.

The program developed a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to ensure interventions were effective and that the program was achieving its intended outcomes.

An independent, external evaluation was undertaken in early 2019.<sup>21</sup> The evaluators applied a mixed-methods approach aimed at assessing whether the program was a suitable alternative to detention model for Malaysia. To answer this key question, the evaluators analysed the extent to which the program:

- Improved the well-being of unaccompanied children
- Facilitated positive engagement with the migration resolution process
- Provided a cost-efficient alternative to immigration detention
- Was adaptable and responsive to the Malaysian context

Data sources included semi-structured interviews with a range of program stakeholders, case review of 50 case files, a recent internal evaluation, and other program monitoring data and documentation.

The evaluators concluded that:

Overall ... a framework focused on children's well-being and rights facilitates ongoing engagement with the migration resolution process. ... [T]he Program, contingent on further research and feasibility assessment, has the potential to accommodate the sustainable release of all refugee children seeking asylum in Malaysia and avoid costly and unnecessary immigration detention.<sup>22</sup>

This evaluation found that the combination of expertise in child protection and migration was a key factor in the success of the program, and that material aid provided in conjunction with individualised holistic case management was a contributing factor to the fulfilment of program outcomes. The evaluation also found the program is a cost-effective alternative to immigration detention, with basic cost analysis showing the program is approximately 90% cheaper than immigration detention.

<sup>16</sup> Independent Family Returns Panel. 2012. *Independent Family Returns Panel Annual Report 2011-2012*. Retrieved from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/257175/ifrp-report.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257175/ifrp-report.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Independent Family Returns Panel. 2014. *Independent Family Returns Panel Annual Report 2012-2014*. Retrieved from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/583769/Independent\\_Family\\_Returns\\_report\\_2012\\_to\\_2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583769/Independent_Family_Returns_report_2012_to_2014.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Independent Family Returns Panel. 2016. *Independent Family Returns Panel report 2014-2016*. Retrieved from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/583790/Independent\\_Family\\_Returns\\_Panel\\_report\\_2014-16.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583790/Independent_Family_Returns_Panel_report_2014-16.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Independent Family Returns Panel. 2012. *Independent Family Returns Panel Annual Report 2011-2012*.

<sup>20</sup> Independent Family Returns Panel. 2016. *Independent Family Returns Panel report 2014-2016*. p.8

<sup>21</sup> Lighthouse Partnerships. 2019. *External evaluation: SUKA Society Community Placement and Case Management Program*. Unpublished document on file with IDC.

<sup>22</sup> Lighthouse Partnerships. 2019. *External evaluation* p. 3.



## FAMILY CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN THE UNITED STATES

The Family Case Management Program operated in the United States between January 2016 and June 2017.<sup>23</sup> It piloted a tailored supervision program for vulnerable families awaiting immigration court hearings, such as pregnant women, nursing mothers, and families with special needs children.

The program provided intensive compliance monitoring with a low case ratio, individualized family support from community-based partners, and an orientation on their legal responsibilities. Qualified case managers worked with families to access to holistic community-based services tailored to the families' medical, emotional and social needs.<sup>24</sup>

The program was designed on the premise that, by meeting urgent needs, exploring all options in the individual case and building trust, the families would be more ready, willing and able to comply with all aspects of the immigration process.<sup>25</sup> A total of 2,163 people (from 952 households) participated in the program.

An internal evaluation published by the provider, GEO Care, drawing from program monitoring data found the holistic case management approach produced strong results. Analysing the program's participation and compliance records, they reported 93.0% attendance at legal orientation, 99.3% attendance at court proceedings, 97.3% program check-in compliance, and an 86.8% favourable rate when a participant was terminated from the program.<sup>26</sup> Qualitative data sourced from case file notes indicated families experienced improved quality of life through the support and services provided by the program. Further, the evaluation found the collaborative framework between government, provider, and community partners "was proven to be a pilot that could be scaled to meet the needs of ICE in the future."<sup>27</sup>

An independent evaluation was also undertaken by the Women's Refugee Commission, which had been involved in the project as a Community Reference Committee member.<sup>28</sup> Data collected for this evaluation included:

- Interviews with sub-contracted organisations
- Interview with an ICE official
- Interviews with a small number of family case workers
- Program reports
- Publically available program statistics

The Women's Refugee Commission sought to explain the lessons learned, including best practices and areas for improvement. In addition to the same compliance findings as GEO Care, it reported the program attracted significant cost savings at US\$36 per family per day,<sup>29</sup> compared with US\$140 *per person* per day in adult immigration detention, and US\$798 per family per day in family detention.<sup>30</sup> Some areas identified for improvement included contracting logistics, inconsistencies in enrolment processes, lack of immigration system knowledge by contracted staff, challenges in accessing legal services, and gaps in data tracking.

At the time of writing, an internal evaluation by ICE completed in March 2017 was not publically available. However, some of the findings are reported in the WRC report and in a Congressional Research Services Report.<sup>31</sup> These report that the internal review concluded case management improved families' understanding of the system, supported them in navigating the emotional demands of the process, and made it easier for them to comply with immigration proceedings.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>23</sup> This description draws from: GEO Care. 2017. *Family Case Management Program: Summary report*. GEO Care; Loiselle, Mary F. 2016. "Geo Care's new family case management program." GEO World, 2-3. Accessed 23.03.2017 at <http://www.geogroup.com/userfiles/1de79aa6-2ff2-4615-a997-7869142237bd.pdf>; Women's Refugee Commission. 2019. *The Family Case Management Program: Why Case Management Can and Must be part of the US Approach to Immigration*. New York: WRC. Retrieved from: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/rights/resources/1807-the-family-case-management-program-why-case-management-can-and-must-be-part-of-the-us-approach-to-immigration>;

<sup>24</sup> Immigration and Customs Enforcement. 2016. *Fact sheet: Stakeholder referrals to the ICE/ERO Family Case Management Program*. Available at <http://discuss.ilw.com/content.php?5693-News-ICE-Factsheet-on-the-Family-Case-Management-Program>

<sup>25</sup> Loiselle. 2016. "Geo Care's new family case management program."

<sup>26</sup> GEO Care. 2017. *Family Case Management Program*

<sup>27</sup> GEO Care. 2017. *Family Case Management Program* p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Women's Refugee Commission. 2019. *The Family Case Management Program*

<sup>29</sup> Bendix, Aria. 2017. "ICE Shuts Down Program for Asylum-Seekers." *The Atlantic*. 9 June 2017. Retrieved 6 September 2017 from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/news/archive/2017/06/ice-shuts-down-program-for-asylum-seekers/529887/>

<sup>30</sup> Women's Refugee Commission. 2019. *The Family Case Management Program*. p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> Singer, Audrey. 2019. *Immigration: Alternatives to Detention (ATD) Programs*. CRS Report R45804. Washington DC: Congressional Research Services. Retrieved from: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homesecc/R45804.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Women's Refugee Commission. 2019. *The Family Case Management Program*. p. 8.



## ALTERNATIVE CARE PILOT FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN IN MEXICO

In 2015 and 2016, Mexico implemented a small pilot to explore community-based alternative care for unaccompanied children. The pilot enabled children to be released from detention to two open-door alternative care programs run by SOS Children's Villages and Covenant House. The pilot was developed under the auspices of the National Migration Institute's Citizen Council, through a working group comprised of immigration and refugee authorities and two civil society organizations that specialise in alternative care programs for children. The program design was informed by the IDC's Community Assessment and Placement model, with IDC providing technical support in the design and development process. A key objective of the pilot was to strengthen and formalise mechanisms for screening, referral and case management.

During the pilot, the working group met regularly to review and modify the process, addressing specific challenges that arose during implementation. After the implementation period ended, the working group interviewed representatives from each implementing organisation, and held a multi-stakeholder evaluation meeting. These discussions paid particular attention to the processes of screening, referral and case management.

The working group used the data from these interviews to prepare a pilot description document and an evaluation presentation. In addition, IDC prepared a supplementary document with independent observations on the implementation process and recommended next steps. All three documents were presented before the National Migration Institute's Citizen Council.<sup>33</sup>

The results from this pilot subsequently informed similar alternative to detention initiatives for asylum seekers that were implemented by immigration and refugee authorities and civil society organizations, with the support of UNHCR.<sup>34</sup> One year later, pilot implementers from the various initiatives participated in a national stakeholder evaluation to reflect on the impact of the pilots and promote shared learning.<sup>35</sup>

## THE ALTERNATIVE TO DETENTION NETWORK IN EUROPE

The European Alternatives to Detention Network is a civil-society led project that aims to build evidence that case management increases engagement with immigration procedures, and to use that evidence to reduce the use of detention.<sup>36</sup> It links civil society organisations in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland and the United Kingdom to enable peer-support for groups implementing an alternative to detention case management pilot project, and to develop and implement shared national and regional advocacy strategies. The Network started in 2017.

The project has collaboratively developed shared monitoring and evaluation criteria during the course of the pilots. Data collection for monitoring includes a standardised case management summary sheet, which is completed by case managers in each program for all of their clients. These summary sheets establish a core set of data, which is complemented by qualitative descriptions and learnings from implementers.

An interim independent evaluation of the projects in Bulgaria, Cyprus and Poland was undertaken in 2018.<sup>37</sup> Drawing from the quantitative and qualitative monitoring data, the evaluation found the vast majority (97%) of individual migrants who entered the pilots remained engaged with immigration procedures, and that quality case management increased individuals' ability to work towards case resolution. The interim evaluation results have been used by the implementors to improve the pilots and their data collection methodology.

<sup>33</sup> Instituto Nacional de Migración. 2016. *La segunda sesión Ordinaria del Consejo Ciudadano del INM se realizó el 30 de Junio de 2016*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gob.mx/inm/documentos/segunda-sesion-ordinaria-cc-inm?idiom=es>

<sup>34</sup> Instituto de Judicatura Federal. 2017. *Anuario de Derechos Humanos del Instituto de Judicatura Federal I-2017*. <https://www.ijf.cjf.gob.mx/cursososp/2018/Mayo/Anuario/Anuario-2017-Completo.pdf>, p. 389

<sup>35</sup> International Detention Coalition. 2017. "Stakeholders evaluate ATD implementation in Mexico." Available at: <https://idcoalition.org/news/stakeholders-evaluate-atd-implementation-in-mexico-2/>

<sup>36</sup> For more information visit <https://www.atdnetwork.org/>

<sup>37</sup> Ohtani, Eiri. 2018. *Alternatives to detention from theory to practice: Evaluation of three engagement-based alternative to immigration detention pilot projects in Bulgaria, Cyprus and Poland*. EPIM. Retrieved from: <https://www.atdnetwork.org/news/evaluation-of-alternative-to-detention-pilot-projects-shows-positive-impact-of-case-management/>



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## ABOUT THE IDC

The International Detention Coalition (IDC) is a unique global network of over 400 non-governmental organisations, faith-based groups, academics and practitioners in almost 90 countries that advocate for and provide direct services to refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in immigration detention. We are the only international organisation focused explicitly on immigration detention and alternatives to detention. With an international Secretariat based in Melbourne, Australia, the IDC works globally through Regional Coordinators in Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East & North Africa (MENA). To learn more about the IDC, including our mission, key areas of work, and strategic priorities, please visit [www.idcoalition.org](http://www.idcoalition.org).

## ABOUT IDC BRIEFING PAPERS

The International Detention Coalition (IDC) works closely with government policymakers, multilateral agencies, and civil society to seek practical, rights-based migration management solutions. This Briefing Paper series seeks to challenge common misconceptions about the use and effectiveness of immigration detention in migration management; to highlight global positive alternatives to immigration detention; and to provide pragmatic guidance to state policymakers on how to effectively govern migration while upholding human rights.

**Collaborative.** This Briefing Paper series will draw upon the unique breadth and expertise of the IDC network. Briefing Papers will be researched and written in collaboration with IDC members and partners, including prominent academics and individual practitioners in fields as diverse as law, migration, psychology, human rights, and social work.

**Evidence based.** The IDC is committed to speaking from an evidence-based position that includes, where possible, the perspectives of those affected by immigration detention. Briefing Papers will draw upon the most recent and reputable evidence in their fields.

**Solutions focused.** Briefing Papers will focus on providing a number of pragmatic and positive practice examples from around the world that policymakers can directly apply to their own migration context.