TOPIC 7. OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

Planning for the long term care of our children.

Preface:

Please note that this topic (Our Children's future – Planning for the Long term care of our children) is based on ideas which were developed as part of the original Memory Project training programme in Uganda.This means that some of the language and examples are geared to the culture of Uganda and the particular problems of families living with HIV/Aids.

But we believe that most of the basic ideas will be useful for people living in other parts of the world and facing many different problems.

We hope that workshop leaders will find ways to adapt the ideas to fit the culture and the needs of their group and we shall be very pleased to have feedback about different ways of getting the messages across. We can then pass on useful information to other groups who are going down the same road.

Please contact us via: **www.memorybooks.org.uk/feed-back-form**

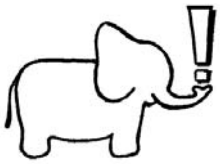
Icons used in this document:



This is where you can get a picture of how the topic fits into the whole structure of the Memory Book training programme and what it aims to achieve with the group members.



When this icon appears at the beginning of each topic it describes how the topic is broken into sessions or group activities and provides a guide to the time to be spent on each session. Elsewhere this icon details what needs to be taught by the end of a particular session or activity



Elephants don't forget and you should not forget this important piece of information or idea.



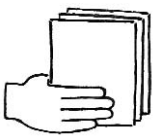
Key facts for the trainers/workshop leaders to get across during the session.



Guidance notes for trainer/leaders on how to run this session.



A story that draws a picture of a situation or explains a point or idea to the group.



Material/sheet to be given out to the group.

Background information for trainers/group leaders



This topic is covered in two sessions:



Part A. Planning ahead – why we cant leave things to chance. This section helps parents to think the unthinkable – what will happen to their children if they are not around to see them through to independence? For some parents its too painful to face the prospect of being separated from their children, whether its due to death, marriage breakdown or war, because they just cant see a solution. Other parents still cling to the hope that, if the worst happens, the old family support networks will take over as they did when communities were more stable. For the children who live in families where disaster is just around the corner, but where no-one talks to them about it, their lives are a nightmare of uncertainty. On the other hand, if parents can be helped to face reality and to talk openly with their children about what might happen in the future, they have taken the first steps towards making a workable plan. Their children will be better prepared to cope, knowing who to trust and rely on. This topic will help parents to face their fears and look at practical solutions. The information given below ties in with ideas raised in other topics (eg. knowing what children can understand and cope with at different ages (topic 2), opening up communications in the family (topic 3) and knowing how to use the law to make plans stick (topic 9.)

Part B. Family Group Conferences.* This section focuses on a well-tried system for bringing family members and the wider community together to work out how to look after children who are orphaned or separated from their parents. Through role play, workshop members will have the chance to try out this system and decide if it could help them to work out a safe plan for their children.

(* the ideas suggested in this section are based on a model for using Family Group Conferences, which was developed in New Zealand and is now widely used in many other countries. But the basic idea, of the whole community pulling together to find a way to support vulnerable children, will probably feel quite familiar and comfortable to many workshop members because it was the way many communities in Africa worked things out in "the old days.")



Part A. Planning ahead.

Aims of this session are to help parents to:

- Understand that PLANNING FOR CHILDREN is at the centre of the Memory Project.
- Realise that a good plan is the best legacy for their children.
- Listen to new ideas, learn to think more widely about how to make a safe plan.
- Think about the family's situation from the child's point of view.
- Be open about their fears for the future and join forces with other parents so they can help each other.

MATERIALS needed for this session:

- Newsprint and marker pens + rough papers and pens for group members.
- Copies of Discussion Poster questions for small groups.
- Copies of Planning Jigsaw for each person
- Copies of Mango Tree for each person
- IF POSSIBLE make a list of useful contacts in the local area – support groups, local council, local courts/legal system, NGOs/CBOs operating in the area, any other individuals or groups that may be useful for parents. It may be better to make this list after the workshop so you can include ideas from members of the group.

Copies of all these materials can be found at the end of these notes.



KEY FACTS TO GET ACROSS IN PART A:

- We live in an uncertain world and **everyone** needs to make fall back plans for their children, not only parents with HIV/Aids.
- We cant risk just hoping for the best because many families and communities are more broken up than they were in "the old days" .
- Children nearly always know when there is a crisis in the family. Its much better for them if the facts are openly discussed and they are involved in future planning.
- Starting to plan and prepare our children early increases the chance that arrangements will work out well.
- There must be many other parents in our community facing the same problems. We will all benefit if we join forces, share ideas and find ways to help each other.
- Our plans may not be perfect but are better than NO plan!



CASE STUDY 1

This is a story about two sisters, one living in Kenya, the other living in London. Both were widows with big families, both of them living with HIV. Both of the sisters put off making plans for the future care of their children because they were sure that if they died, their sister would step in to take care of the children. The only problem was that the two sisters hadn't talked to each other about their HIV status. They were relying on a "plan" which had never been discussed and, because both of them were ill, there was absolutely no security for the children.



How to run this session:

⇨ Introduce the subject of Planning by reminding parents it is at the very centre of the Memory Project and all the other topics, both before and after today's session, will help them to understand more about what's involved and why its so important.

⇨ Follow on with a short presentation covering the Key Facts given at the start of this Topic and relevant sections of Information on the Memory Project. (This information sheet is used in Topic 1 to provide a summary of the whole of the Memory Project training programme. It is included at the end of these notes so you can easily use the parts of the paper which are specifically about Planning. These parts are high-lighted in yellow.)

⇨ Next divide workshop members into small groups of 3 or 4. Ask them to work through the questions in Discussion Poster "Planning for our Children." Its important that they tackle all the questions. (Set a time limit depending how much time you have, suggested 30" minutes minimum.)

⇨ Bring the small groups together to feed back their ideas. Write up on newsprint (and keep an eye on the checklist given below to make sure main issues are covered.)

⇨ Next introduce the idea of the Planning Jigsaw. Draw a big version of it on newsprint. The idea is for parents to fill in the spaces with each new skill or idea they learn or already know which will help towards making a good plan.

⇨ Invite group members to call out relevant ideas/skills they feel they have already achieved. Write these onto the blank jigsaw. (For example, "learning to listen to my children", "collecting information for my Memory Book", "becoming Open about HIV so my children understand the problem", "joining a support group where I can get ideas on planning" etc.) ***See check list and make sure important ideas are raised.***



⇨ When you are sure that group members have understood that all these little bits of knowledge are part of the "big picture", give out copies of the Planning Jigsaw to take home so they can keep filling in the pieces.

⇨ Next put up a big copy of the "Mango Tree" poster. (This poster can be used in various ways in the workshops. In the context of Planning for Children, it is an easy visual way of collecting names of people or organisations who might be able to help with making plans for children.)

⇨ Explain the purpose of the Mango Tree and invite workshop members to call out with suggestions to fill in some of the mangoes. (They don't need to give actual names but, for example, "my daughter's godmother", "the teacher from primary school who stayed interested in my kids", "the pastor at our church".)

⇨ Beware that some people will feel there is absolutely no-one amongst family or friends that they can ask for help. So encourage discussion about more official types of support, such as the clan elders, local council members, any NGOs or CBOs working in the area, the legal/court system in the locality. Make sure that people know how to make contact if they need to turn to these organisations or official people for advice.

⇨ Give out copies of the Mango Tree for people to take home.

⇨ Finally summarise the different ideas you have introduced today - the questions on the Planning Poster, the Planning Jigsaw and the Mango Tree. Reassure the group that no-one is expected to have all the answers just like that. It takes time, talking to friends, even better talking to the children, to begin to work out the best way forward…… Also reassure them that other workshop topics will help to fill in some of the details. In particular the workshop on legal matters will help parents to know how to make sure their plans will be carried out.

⇨ Before closing the session, encourage workshop members to think about who could become their Planning partner so they can carry on working on these ideas at home. This does not necessarily have to be the person who might be named as guardian but, for example, someone who also has to think about planning for their children. So together they can share ideas and keep each other focussed on what they need to do.

END OF PART A….

PART B. Family Group Conferences – Another way to help make plans for our children.
(this part of the topic is coming shortly)

Information on the Memory Project

1. PLANNING FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

Aids has affected so many parents and people of working age, leaving many extended families swamped with responsibility and unable to take in any more dependant children. In other cases families have been torn apart by fears and mis-beliefs to do with Aids. So, in too many cases, the traditional systems of care by relatives or clan members, or informal arrangements with neighbours or community members, can no longer to be relied on.

Although there are now effective treatments for people with HIV/Aids, it is likely to be many years before they (ARVs) become universally available and in the meantime, the terrible reality is that many more children will be orphaned, joining the millions who are already struggling to survive without parental guidance and without a secure plan for their future. Therefore in the Memory Project training programme great emphasis has been put on helping parents to look their worst fears in the face and start really thinking about different ways their children could be looked after in the event of their early death.

Over the past fifteen years groups of parents have tried out the ideas described below. However ill and desperate they felt, they showed that they wanted to do their best for their children – but they needed help to work out what would happen if they died before the children were old enough to look after themselves. The structure of the Memory Book together with practical workshops on opening up communications with children, planning ahead and making the future as secure as possible, empowered many of them to overcome their fears about disclosing their HIV status. Being open within the family knocked the first hole through the wall of silence and once they were free of the terrible burden of secrecy they found they had more energy and confidence to face the future. **Many parents were also surprised to find out how well their children coped with the facts and that they welcomed the opportunity to be involved in working out the best solutions for the family.**

The Memory Project training programme which is summarised below (and available on this website) is built upon the experience and inspiration of these pioneering parents. However, though there are frequent references to families living with HIV/Aids, we believe that much of the information, and suggestions for practical things to do to protect children, would apply just as well for the huge number of families whose lives are overtaken by disasters beyond their control and where children risk being separated from their parents, for example by war, famine or migration.

With or without Aids as a factor in the immediate family, many children are surrounded with uncertainty and risk. If parents can open up communications in the family, provide their children with a strong sense of identity and help them prepare for the unpredictable future, this will go some way to help them survive whatever problems come there way.

> ***So, as much as we may hope that the HIV crisis is past its peak, and that other disasters are better controlled, we believe that this is not the right time to cool down on the ideas suggested below. On the contrary it is time to rev up efforts to help parents to prepare and plan for their children and to spread the ideas as far and wide as possible.***

These ideas started with the Memory Book* which made it easy for parents to put together all the information that children need to know about who they are and how they fit into their wider family and community. When parents started to write their Memory Books they realised there was a lot more they needed to do to give their children the best chance to survive tough times in the future.

These were some of the questions they asked:

- How can we start talking with our children, telling them important (and often difficult) information and listening to what they have to say?
- **If we have HIV or face other serious problems in our family, HOW can we begin to make plans that will keep our children safe in the future?**
- **If we manage to make plans, how can we be sure they will happen ?**
- What can we do to prepare our children for the possibility of our death and that their lives may completely change?
- If we are not there to bring them up how can we help our children to hold on to their sense of identity, to know who they are and where they belong?

These and many other questions were gradually built into a training programme which became known as **The Memory Project.**** The **Memory Book** and the contents of the **Memory Project training programme** have now been made freely available on the **Memory Project Website***** for anyone who wants to use them.

A summary of the main topics covered by the Memory Project is given below. (These and other relevant subjects are covered in much more detail in ten Training Topics, all of which are or will be available on the website.)

Information on the Memory Project

2. PUTTING CHILDREN IN THE PICTURE AND INCLUDING THEM IN MAKING PLANS FOR THEIR OWN FUTURE.

This involves helping children to understand what is going to happen in the future and who they can trust for support and advice. It means using the time that is left to pass on knowledge and skills so children will be better prepared to cope on their own in the future.

A huge problem for parents living with HIV/Aids is when and how to start talking openly to their children about their sero-status. The later they leave it the more frightening it becomes. Meanwhile children, who have often guessed the truth, are left with their questions unanswered and their fears about the future getting worse day by day. (Although this paper mainly refers to the problem of HIV, keeping quiet about other "secrets in the family" can be just as damaging – even very young children pick up the signals when something is wrong.)

If they don't learn the facts until after the death of their parent, children often react with anger because they were not trusted with the truth. They have also been given an unspoken message that Aids is unmentionable. This increases their sense of stigma and isolation.

They will have to cope alone with their grief, their shock and their fears about Aids at a time when their lives are being turned upside down. This might include being separated from brothers and sisters or being moved to live with virtual strangers. Worst of all, it's too late to get answers directly from their parents. That chance has been lost forever.

Parents need to understand that knowing the truth about Aids is generally less terrifying than being left in the dark to worry alone. On the contrary, when children are allowed to share the family problems they are already starting to face up to their future loss; they understand why they are being asked to take on more of the household duties; they can use every opportunity to pick up skills and knowledge from their parents; they can learn first hand about HIV transmission and how to stay safe (and what better form of protection can there be than hearing about it from your parent who is living with the reality?)

If their parents give them a chance to speak for themselves children can even say what they hope for their own future care. If time allows they will be able to get to know their future carers, work out plans for future schooling or work and how they will keep in touch with siblings and extended family.

To achieve this level of openess within the family, many parents need practical help to learn how to start talking and when to start? They want to know:

- How much detail to give?
- How much can very young children understand?
- How can parents answer awkward questions?
- Can they trust the children not to gossip outside the home?

Parents also have to face that opening up to their children about Aids often means talking about other family problems, for instance illness or death of the other parent, sexual matters, money - topics which in many households are not easily talked about with children. But if these subjects remain taboo it is virtually impossible to prepare children for the loss and changes ahead and they cannot be actively involved in planning for their own future.

As well as encouraging parents to do some straight talking, many of them also need help to learn to LISTEN to their children. They need to welcome questions, be on the alert for opportunities to drop important information into the conversation, give their children time to react and encourage them to ask more questions. There's no doubt that when parents "tune in" to their children, it makes it easier for them to put their fears and feelings into words.

Finally parents need to know that telling important information is never finished. One quick explanation will not do the trick. But their patience and willingness to talk it over time and again, to answer questions and to go at the child's pace, will gradually make it clear that the situation is not too terrible to mention. Problems ***can*** be managed. The unknown future ***can*** be faced.

Topic 2 of the training programme **covers the different stages of child development, what children can understand at different ages and ideas to help parents open up communications in the family. Topic 3 is about facing up to secrets in the family.**

3. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE CARE OF CHILDREN

When one or both parents has HIV/Aids, it is unavoidable that family life will be disrupted at some future date. Although children cannot be protected from the distress of seeing their parents ill or dying, a great deal can be done to reduce their fears about what is going on in their home and, crucially, what will happen to them in the future.

But unfortunately when parents despair because the future looks so bleak and they don't know how to start to make a plan, children are put at real risk. In many cases children are not told what is happening until suddenly their parents become too ill to carry on or die before arrangements can be made. In some such cases senior relatives have to decide at the graveside where the children will sleep that night. Sometimes they are moved far away from everyone they know; brothers and sisters may become separated while other children have to cope alone without adult carers.

Without really understanding what is going to happen next its difficult for vulnerable children like these to hold on to their sense of identity and to keep hope alive that life will ever return to normal.

BUT if parents understand why it is so important to be open and to make plans before the crisis overtakes them, they and their children will be much stronger to face whatever happens in the future. This means being open with the children, involving them in looking at options and trying to make plans which they feel comfortable with.

Something encouraging to keep in mind is that Aids has an advantage over some other illnesses or accidental death - the course of the illness nearly always allows time to make plans - provided the parents understand what has to be done and are prepared to do the painful preparatory work with their children.

Safe and reliable arrangements can't be made overnight so parents need to look for solutions while they have strength and time on their side. If there is no obvious family member to take responsibility, parents will have to look further afield, for instance:

- is there a trustworthy member of the community who would supervise the older children and help them keep the family together in their own home?
- Are there any distant relatives who might take in one or more of the children and help them to keep in touch with siblings living elsewhere?
- Are there any welfare agencies working in the area who look for unrelated families to adopt or foster children?
- Is there a local self-help group whose members would rally round to help the children cope?

If parents can be helped to see that looking ahead will *not* make matters worse, they will find that the energy they wasted on denying their situation can now be used constructively. Like many other parents who have taken this brave step, they will feel a sense of relief and growing confidence that they CAN make a difference to the way things will work out for their children.

Very practical help on ***Planning for children is given in Topic 7*** of the training programme.

4. USING THE LEGAL SYSTEM TO MAKE PLANS STICK.

The best of plans can fall apart if they are not protected by the proper legal processes for naming guardians, making wills and safeguarding family property.

But when the Memory Project training programme got going it soon became clear that most families had little or no knowledge of the law; some people believed that making a will would hasten their own death; others were convinced that, as women, they had no rights under the law.

So the Memory Project now includes sessions on how to write wills, make formal guardianship arrangements and register ownership of property.

Understanding the law and dealing with people in authority might be a great challenge for parents who are struggling with illness and isolation. But with a bit of knowledge and encouragement many of them have somehow gathered their strength and tackled whatever had to be done in order to leave things well organised.

The importance of ***using the law of the land to protect plans and property is covered in Topic 9*** of the training programme. The Memory Project website also includes a simple guidebook on family law, guidelines on how to write a legal will and sample will form. (At present these papers relate to the law in Uganda but legal information for other countries will be added as they become available.)

5. WHO AM I? HELPING CHILDREN HOLD ON TO THEIR IDENTITY BY SAVING IMPORTANT FAMILY INFORMATION AND CHILDHOOD MEMORIES.

One way to help children survive the death of parents involves providing them with information which will give them a clear sense of identity and values to live by.

This includes making Memory Books which record personal information as well as giving details of the family background, traditions and beliefs. The written words and pictures, together with small familiar objects, saved in Memory Baskets or boxes, will bring back memories and help children to understand who they are and how they fit into their extended family and community

When the Memory Book was first shown to parents with Aids, they very quickly understood the value of writing down important family information. They realised that, if

Information on the Memory Project

they died when the children were young, their words would always be there in the future, to help them manage without direct parental guidance. They wanted to be sure their children had the facts - information which would give them a sense of history and of belonging. But as well as personal history, many of them wrote about their values and beliefs and their hopes for how their children would carry themselves into the future,

As parents started to record their family history, some of them also began to collect small domestic objects, favourite books, photos, small possessions which had belonged to father and mother - not valuables, but everyday items which would help to keep memories alive and remind children of normal daily life. Some parents used specially woven baskets and others decorated tin trunks to store their treasure trove.

Although the original purpose of the Memory Book was just to make it easy for parents to write down all this vital information, it soon became clear that making Memory Books was also a sort of therapy - it gave parents the chance to remember happy experiences in their earlier lives, to describe their own achievements, skills and interests. They began to realise that they need not be remembered only as tired and sick but for their whole life experience - and that their ideas and values need not come to an end at their death.

Another plus was that, in many cases, once parents started writing their Memory Books and collecting the special bits and pieces for their Memory Baskets, their children became curious and soon they were drawn into the work. This gave parents a great opportunity to tell stories about the family and to explain the importance of carrying ideals and beliefs through to the next generation. So, as well as achieving its aim of helping parents to pass on important information about the family and individual children, The Memory Book has also provided parents with a "way in" to start to talk about their illness and the changes ahead. For many children this has been a far more comfortable experience than sitting face to face with the parents for a painful discussion. Because making the Memory Book is a long process, there are plenty of chances to go back over difficult information or questions which the child wants to ask again.

From the child's perspective, the Memory Book gives answers to questions they would have asked their parents over the years; it provides accurate information to help them understand their family background and all that has happened in recent times. It even helps them to keep contact with extended family and distant friends - who might otherwise be lost to them. Most important it helps them to really understand who they are.

Over time parents have come up with many new ideas which have been included in the revised Memory Book for Africa and as well as explaining how to get started, these guidelines include subject headings to help parents work step by step through different aspects of their family's life.

The whole process of **making Memory Books is covered in Topic 4** of the training programme and copies of the Memory Book in several different languages can be freely printed from the website.

OTHER TOPICS WHICH WILL BE COVERED IN THE TRAINING PROGRAMME INCLUDE:

- Facing up to family secrets – help to understand why open-ness usually works better than secrecy & how to break through the wall of silence.
- Changing relationships in the family – a look ahead to coping with feelings when a new partner joins the family or children have to move under another roof.
- Being prepared for the hard times ahead – helping children to be as prepared as possible for loss and change.
- Living responsibly with HIV. Because thankfully many people now live longer with HIV, new problems come up about who to tell, new relationships, and how to help children avoid risky behaviour.

(Please note that some of these topics are still in preparation and will be added to the website, along with other new material, as soon as possible.)

*****_The origins of the Memory Book are described at http://www.memorybooks.org.uk/memory-book-story - on this website._

******_The Memory Project was developed with the help of a group of HIV+ mothers who were members of a self-help group in Kampala, Uganda, from 1995 onwards._

*******_This website includes many of the original ideas and materials which were developed in Kampala, and now adapted to make it more user-friendly for self-help groups working without professional trainers. The website also includes new training material, translations of the Memory Book into different languages and provides opportunities for sharing ideas and resources with others who are working on the same ideas._

For more information you are welcome to contact us via the website:
http://www.memorybooks.org.uk/contact-memory-books

www.memorybooks.org.uk

Planning for our Children

- **Why** do parents need to make plans for their children?
- **When** is the right time to start planning?
- **Who** can we rely on to take care of our children in the future?
- **Should we include the children** in talking about plans?
- **Who** can help us make the best plans?
- **How** can we be sure our plans will be carried out?



ILLUSTRATION BY JANE SHEPHERD – taken from "We Miss You All" – published by W.A.S.N. Zimbabwe

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MEMORY PROJECT

PLANNING FOR OUR CHILDREN - check list for workshop leaders

Here are some ideas to look for when group members give feedback on discussion on PLANNING FOR OUR CHILDREN.

Why must parents make plans for their children?

- In a community where many people have HIV/Aids we can't rely on the traditional ways of caring for orphan children.
- Its important to check whether grandparents or other relatives are able to take on more responsibility.
- The pattern of HIV/Aids is unpredictable. Parents don't know if they have a short or long life ahead of them. They must be prepared.
- Most parents have strong ideas about how they want their children to grow up. Making good plans gives them some say over the future.

When is the right time to start planning?

- Some parents put off making plans because they still feel well. But this is the time to do it, when they have strength to make visits and organise plans.
- Making legal arrangements for guardianship and sorting out property rights takes time. Don't delay!
- Once parents have begun to talk openly to their children, they can become involved in planning for their own future. They need time to think.
- Children will be reassured when they know that parents are making plans for their future care.
- First plans don't always work out. Its important to leave time to start again.

Who can we trust to take care of our children?

- Some families are lucky to have relatives who can be trusted to treat the children as their own. But even in the best families this needs to be sorted out and agreed well before the parent is very sick.
- Other families will turn to trusted friends and again this needs to be formally agreed so that relatives won't move in after the parent's death.
- If parents name a legal guardian it is essential that person is asked in advance and agrees to take on the responsibility.
- Older children may keep the family together if someone can be found to give them support.
- If families have no-one close to turn to, its important to go to community leaders or talk to members of a local support group who have experience of helping parents with their plans.
- The worst decision is to do nothing.

Do we include the children in talking about plans?

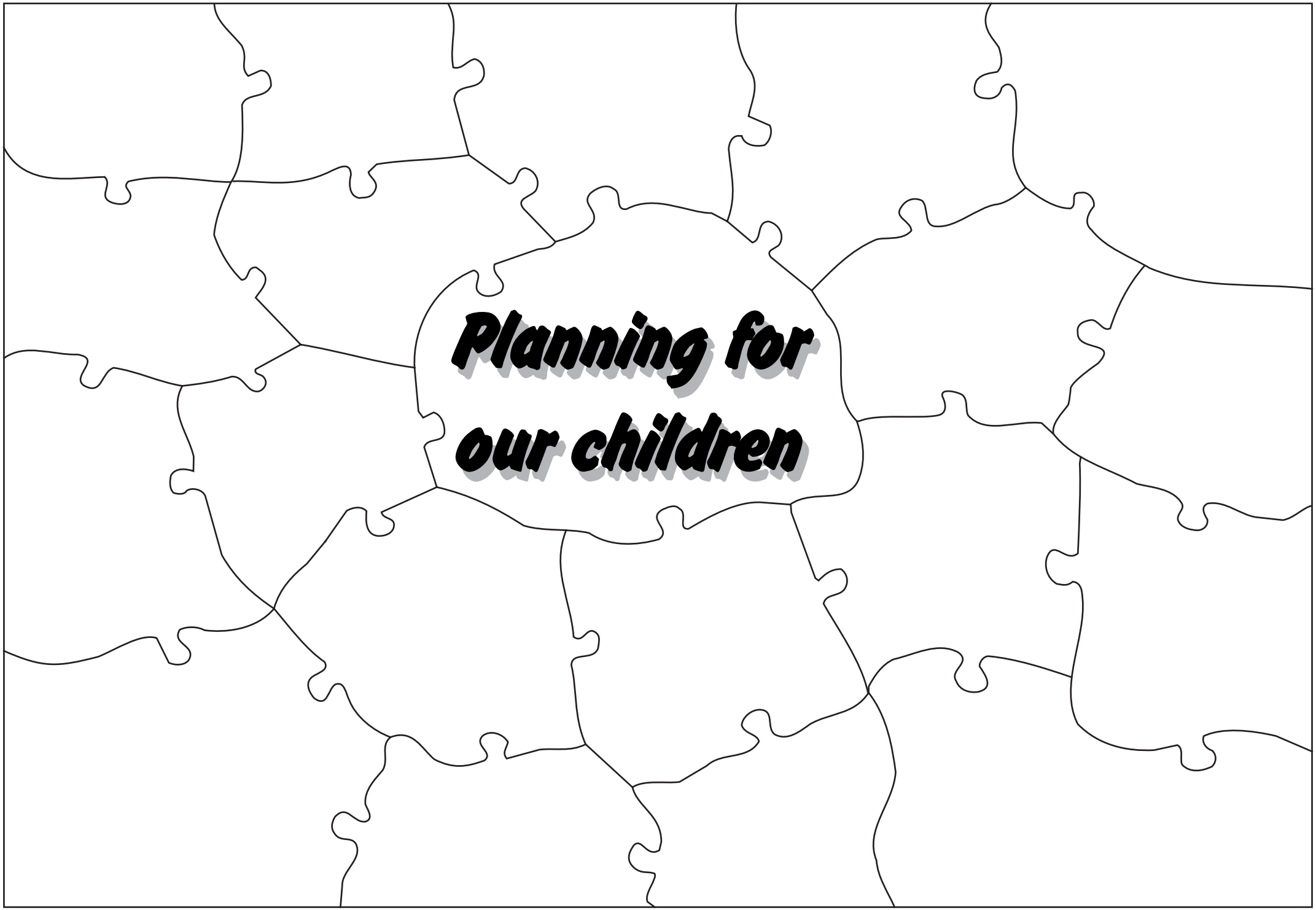
- The plans are FOR the children, so of course their hopes and wishes are important.
- Children need help to be realistic about what can and cannot be arranged.
- They need to understand the family finances, for example whether there will be enough money for school fees, who does the family home belong to. All these things can be covered in discussion about future plans.

Who can help us make the best plans?

- Parents with strong families or trusted friends can turn to them
- Others will talk to members of support groups who have exerience of helping parents make plans.
- Parents who feel very isolated may need help from community leaders or welfare organisations.
- Attending the Memory Project training will give parents ideas on how to make a start.

How can we make sure our plans are carried out?

- Don't leave anything to chance!
- Plans need to be written down. Preferably in the form of a legally valid Will.
- The Will should include information about all the property owned by the parent and the names of people who are willing to be legal guardians of the children.
- Parents who attend the Memory Project Training will learn how to make Wills and how to get good legal advice.
- Above all, children who are old enough to take responsibility, need to know about the plans, where to find the important family papers and where to go for advice if things do not go according to the plans.


Planning for
our children

MEMORY PROJECT

PLANNING JIGSAW - check list for workshop leaders

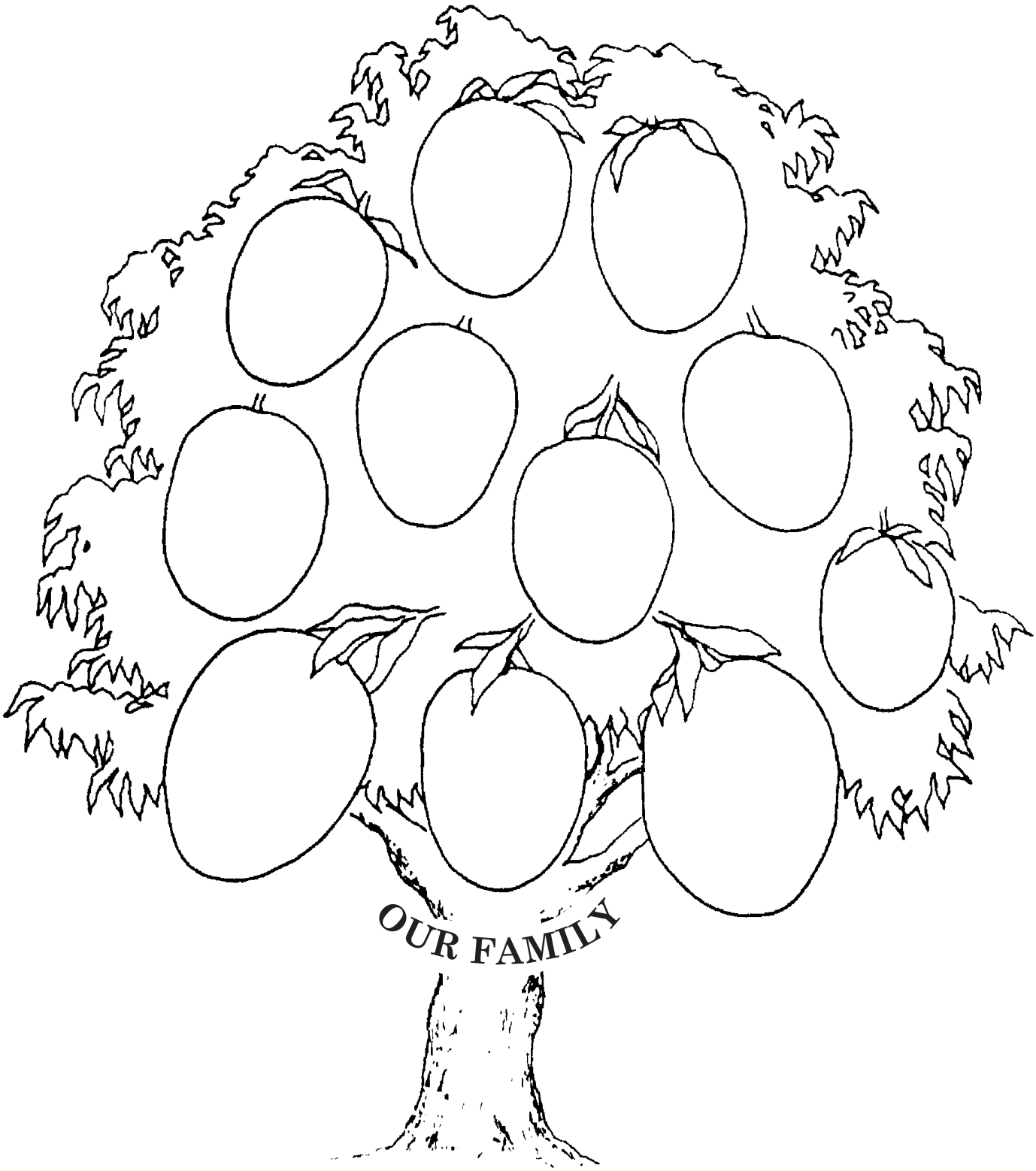
Most parents who join in the Memory Project workshops have a goal. They want to make sure their children will be safe if they are not around to see them through to independence. At the beginning this can seem an impossible task. **The Planning Jigsaw** gives an easy way to show they are making progress.

The idea is to encourage parents to fill in bits of the jigsaw with information about what they are doing towards preparing their children and making good plans for whatever might happen in the future.

Here are some ideas to look out for in the feedback session:

- Coming on this Workshop to learn more.
- Being prepared to be open about health (or other problems).
- Learning more about what children understand at different ages.
- Making sure children learn practical skills which will help them survive in the future (cultivating, cooking, family trade or business etc.).
- Including children in discussions about their own future, including choosing of guardians if needed.
- Finding out about ownership of property and making sure its properly registered.
- Finding important paperwork and putting in a safe place.(birth certificates, health records etc)
- Starting to write a Memory Book.
- Starting to write a legal will.
- Finding ways to get information about the family background.
- Talking about plans with the children's father and relatives.
- Joining a support group and/or finding a Planning Partner.
- Finding out more about official people and offices that can give advice and support in future (such as local council members, district administrator, court process.).
- Starting to find out about the law of the land and how it can be used to help make plans "stick."
- Getting best available health care for self and children.
- Add any new ideas that come up from the group……

People and Organisations which can help us make plans for our children



MEMORY PROJECT

TOPIC 7 - PLANNING FOR OUR CHILDREN using the mango tree

GROUP ACTIVITY - Using The Mango Tree to help identify people and organisations which can help us make plans for our children.

The Mango Tree idea can be used in several ways in different parts of the Memory Project. For example:

- When parents are just getting started on collecting information to include in the Memory Book they are making for their children, the Mango Tree can be used to make a list of "people who can be asked for ideas and memories." This is the way it is used in Topic 4.
- When parents and children are working together to write a Memory Book, the Mango Tree can be used as an easy way for the chid to write or draw pictures of "Important people in your life."
- **When parents are starting to make plans for the future care of their children, the Mango Tree can be used as an easy way to list "People and Organisations which can help us make plans for our children." This is the way its used in Topic 7 which we are working on today**.

Using the Mango Tree in Topic 7.

- Make a copy of the Mango Tree outline for each member of the group.
- Explain the purpose of the activity: in Topic 7 the Mango Tree is being used as a way of helping people to think about people and organisations which might be able to help them make plans for the future care of children.
- Ask members of the group to call out suggestions of people or organisations and fill in some of the "mangoes."
- Keep an eye on the checklist below and make sure that important ideas are included in discussion.

OR if there is enough time:

- Divide up into small groups and ask people to share ideas so they can learn from each other. They don't have to name names but suggest the sort of people or organisations which could be asked for help.
- Bring the small groups together for feedback. (a check list is given at the end of this sheet.)
- Give out copies of the Planning Mango Tree to take home.

CHECKLIST FOR TRAINERS/WORKSHOP LEADERS:

Here are ideas of people who may be able to help in a practical way or with advice about making safe plans for future care of children:

- Father's relatives.
- Family elders and other extended family members including those living overseas.
- Religious leaders.
- Community leaders and Clan elders.
- The official legal and court system.
- Local, national and international organisations which may have support services for vulnerable children in the area (eg. Plan International, ActionAid, This needs research to find out what is going on locally.)
- Local support groups for parents, especially groups for people living with HIV/Aids. (As above this needs research into what is going on locally.)
- Education authority officials and school teachers who know the child (who may have information about school fee schemes.)
- Health workers.
- Employers, work friends.
- People still living in the village where the family came from.
- Relatives of parent or grandparent who has already died.
- Add other ideas that come from group members.

It is particularly important to make a list of organisations which work in the local area and contact names and addresses of official offices such as the District Administrator, the local Court offices etc. Keep adding to this list as new information comes up.