



Quality of Caregiver–Child Interaction and Social-Emotional Competence of Children Living in Residential Care: The Case of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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1 Introduction: The Ethiopian Context

- High Vulnerability Burden:** Approximately 5.5 million children have been categorised as orphans and vulnerable children mainly driven by conflict, HIV/AIDS, poverty, and climate disasters (World Vision Ethiopia, 2026).
- Alternative Care:** Ethiopia recognises family and community-based care alongside residential care, with family based options prioritised (Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, 2023).

7,203

Children in 136 residential care facilities nationally

2,458

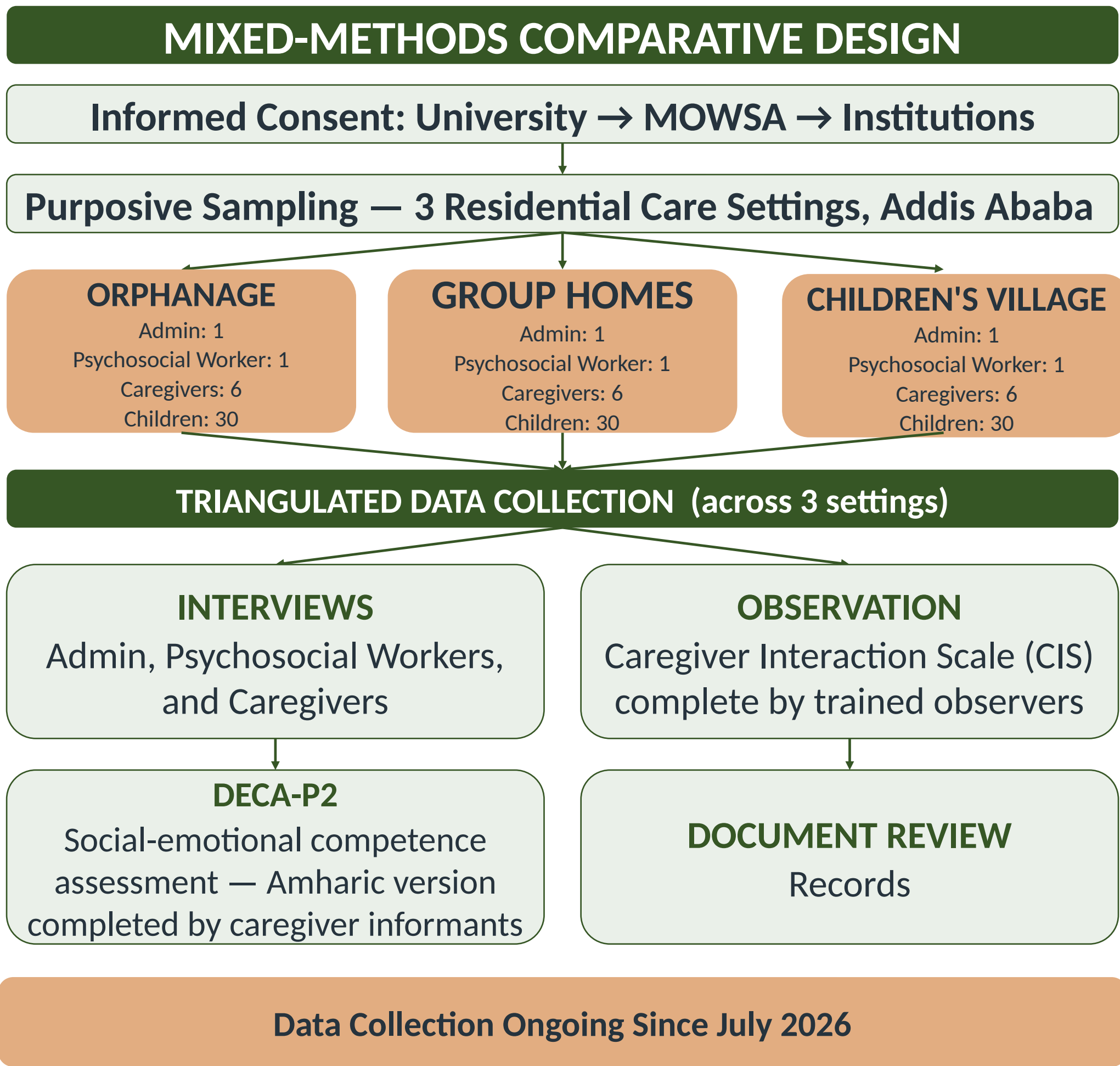
Children across 36 residential care in Addis Ababa (MOWSA, 2023)

- Research Gap:** Limited empirical data on how structural differences across residential care settings impact developmental outcomes.

2 Aim of the Study

- Describe** structural and caregiving characteristics across residential care types.
- Examine** the availability of psychosocial support in each residential care type.
- Assess** social-emotional competence and caregiver-child interaction quality across residential care types.

3 Methods



4 Preliminary Findings

Structure			
Category	Orphanages	Group Homes	Children's Village
Ownership	Government run	NGO	NGO
Admission/Referral	Referrals through government/ legal bodies/child protection mechanisms	Through Government or existing residential care	Through Government or existing residential care
Living Arrangement	Larger number of children living in shared rooms/ units	Smaller group of children living in shared home	Small family like groups living in a village
	Can reach up to 40	From 6 to 10	From 6 to 8
Care Environment	Institutional	Group based in shared home	Family style houses within a village
Caregivers Arrangement	Multiple rotating caregivers with frequent shift changes	Fewer caregivers; shift based care with greater continuity	Consistent designated care giver called house mother
Psychosocial Support			

Preliminary findings suggest differences in psychosocial support that orphanages offer largely basic support (primarily individual/group counselling). Group homes draw more heavily on collaboration with non-governmental partners to extend support beyond what the facility provides directly. Children's villages make additional use of referral pathways for specific or specialised support cases, beyond routine services.

Social-emotional competence and caregiver-child interaction quality (ongoing)

DECA-P2 and CIS data collection is ongoing ($n = 30$ children per care type), and raw scale scores are reported. Preliminary findings suggest that children in traditional orphanages had the lowest social-emotional competence and caregiver–child interaction quality scores ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 0.33$; $M = 2.16$, $SD = 0.30$), whereas those in group homes scored higher ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.30$; $M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.33$). Similarly, children in children’s villages demonstrated higher scores ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.24$; $M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.26$).

5 Implications and Next Step

- Early findings suggest that children in group homes and children’s villages, where caregiving is more consistent, showed higher social-emotional competence and better-quality caregiver–child interactions than those in traditional orphanages with rotating caregivers.
- Access to psychosocial support varies across care types. Strengthening basic psychosocial services in traditional orphanages and formalising referral and partnership systems across settings could improve outcomes for children.
- Next steps: expand data collection to additional residential care settings, complete the full DECA-P2/CIS sample, and share findings with the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs to inform national residential-care quality standards.

References

- Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MOWSA). (2023). National Standards and Guidelines for Alternative Childcare Services in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa: MOWSA.
- World Vision Ethiopia. (2026). Situation Analysis of Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa: World Vision Ethiopia.

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