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Lifos – Centre for Country of Origin Information and Analysis
Swedish Migration Agency

Liberia. Orphanages/children's homes and tracing of relatives

Lifos kindly requests assistance from the Embassy of Sweden in collecting information concerning orphanages, and the tracing of families and relatives of unaccompanied minors in Liberia. The specific questions below are phrased in accordance with the information needs deriving from the current judicial position of the Swedish Migration Agency's Director of Legal Affairs on the processing of aliens' cases regarding unaccompanied minors.

Tracing

To which authority, or other organization, may the Swedish Migration Agency turn in order to trace parents or any other legal guardian to a child presently residing in Sweden?

Answer: Children's Division, Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection.

Which information is needed to be able to do such tracing?

Answer: Full name of Parents or next of kin or neighbor, last known address and year of residence at the last known address, address of next of kin or neighbor

Orphanages/Children's homes

Are there orphanages/children's homes or other institutions with capacity and possibility to receive children returning from Sweden?

Answer: The MoGCSP is not encouraging children being placed in orphanages anymore. They are working with foster carers who have volunteer to provide care for children and these foster carers are in the MoGCSP information system. Except there are no available foster parents then an Government accredited orphanage will be recommended.

If so;

Which authority or organisation should the Swedish Migration Agency turn to initially when a child needs to be placed in an orphanage/children's home?

Answer: Children's Division, Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection.

Are children from all ethnicities accepted?

Answer: Yes.

Are both boys and girls accepted?

Answer: Yes

Can children of all ages stay at the orphanage/children's home?

Are there any restricting regulations concerning the child's age at the time of placement at the orphanage/children's home (e.g. a child over a certain age will not be accepted?)

Answer: Yes. There is a standard alternative care guidelines that governs the placement and removal of children from orphanages or welfare institutions.

Are there any regulations stating that children over a certain age have to move out? (e.g. children in the country will be considered adults at a lower age than eighteen.)

Answer: No. Accept they commit a mature crime such as murder. A person who commits murder at age 16years is held responsible.

Which children are accepted? (Is it enough that the parents have disappeared or it is required that both parents are verified to be dead? Yes. Is it required that other relatives do not want to or cannot take care of the child? Yes.)

Is there in practice a functioning system regarding legal guardianship for children?

Answer: Yes

Are there any formal requirements regarding the guardianship of the child? Yes. If yes, which formal requirements? The MoGCSp has its criteria and several procedures to follow in order to take guardianship of a child. If no, how does the informal regulation of guardianship work?

Is it possible for the children at the orphanage/children's home to be in touch with parents and relatives? Yes. But this is not happening.

Is there access to enough of nutritious food in relation to local eating habits?

Answer: Accredited orphanages meets the minimum standard which also includes nutrition and food.

Is there access to medical treatment?

Answer: Yes. In the Accredited orphanages.

Is there access to schooling and vocational training?

Answer: Only in accredited orphanages

Are the hygienic and sanitary conditions appropriate?

Answer: Satisfactory in orphanages that are accredited.

Is there enough room for storing personal belongings? Is the storage space secured from theft?

Answer: Satisfactory in orphanages that are accredited.

Is there protection against violence and abuse?

Answer: Only in some accredited orphanages that are regularly access.

If possible, we would be grateful for a description of the placement procedure and photos from the orphanage/children's home.

Answer: There are currently 70+ orphanages of which few are accredited. You will have to contact the MoGCSP to provide the information needed.