

6TH BICON SUMMARY REPORT 2025

CARE REFORM FOR
CHILDREN IN ASIA:
A movement for building
inclusive societies, resilient
families, and thriving children.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

BICON 2025 convened government leaders, care experienced advocates, child protection experts, and civil society from across Asia and beyond with a clear mandate: **no child should grow up without a safe, loving family.**

Over two days in Kuala Lumpur, we discussed challenges and advanced concrete solutions – from care reform and family strengthening to social protection, foster and kinship care, mental health, disability inclusion, and evidence driven policy change. **At the centre were leaders with lived experience**, demanding accountability and the reshaping of systems that too often fail children. This summary report, developed to be read in parallel to the official detailed conference report provides a snapshot and flavour of BICON – focusing on the conference recommendations and some inspiring quotes from participants.

Read it. Watch it. Share it. Act on it.

You can join us in our mission to accelerate care reform for children in Asia – by sharing these reports and videos from the conference and by using the BICON recommendations to guide all of us in our actions along the road to care reform.

ABOUT BICON

This was the sixth BICON – the Biennial Conference on Alternative Care for Children in Asia. The BICON Organising Committee is made up of [Family for Every Child](#), [Forget Me Not](#), [Hope and Homes for Children](#), [SOS Children’s Villages International](#) and [Udayan Care](#) working closely with a specially convened Care Experienced Co-ordination Group with delegates from several countries. For the 2025 BICON in Kuala Lumpur, BICON was proud to welcome [UNICEF Malaysia](#) as an official partner. We wish to thank the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia for officiating the opening of BICON, and for their support and participation in the conference. As a prelude to BICON, UNICEF Malaysia and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development co-hosted a national pre-conference dialogue on alternative care with child rights experts and national stakeholders to discuss Malaysia’s progress and challenges in strengthening families and family-based care, in light of Malaysia’s review by the Committee of the Rights of the Child in 2026.

info@bicon.asia

www.bicon.asia

DISCLAIMER

This report provides a flavour of the main BICON 2025 report and includes recommendations shared by speakers and panellists and various quotes; their inclusion does not necessarily imply endorsement by the organising committee, nor do the views expressed necessarily represent all member agencies. This publication may be reproduced freely for educational purposes with proper citation. For all other uses, prior written permission from the BICON organising committee is required (info@bicon.asia).

The report was written by: Nolan Quigley, Consultant working under the guidance of the BICON Organising Committee. Design was by: Katharine James of Hope and Homes for Children.



6th BICON
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON ALTERNATIVE CARE **20**
FOR CHILDREN IN ASIA **25**

6th Biennial International Conference (BICON) on Care Reform for Children in Asia

A movement for building inclusive societies,
resilient families, and thriving children.

15 – 16 October 2025
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



A SELECTION OF VOICES FROM THE BICON STAGE

“ I stand here as a proud representative of the Care Experienced Reference Group of BICON. I carry with me the voices, stories, and aspirations of many young people who, like me, have navigated the complexities of life in care and beyond. BICON is more than just a conference—it is a space for reflection, collaboration, and transformation. A safe space where lived experience meets leadership and where our voices shape the future of care.

(Dikshya Thapa, Coordinator of the BICON Care Experienced Reference Group, Shine Together, Nepal)



“ As we gather here in Asia’s diverse heart, we recognise that all our countries are undergoing different stages of care reform. Some are just beginning to shift away from institutional care. Others have developed strong systems of foster and kinship care. But despite our differences, we share our common truth. Children do not belong in institutions; they belong in families and communities. This is a principle deeply rooted in our cultures, our faiths and our moral duty.

(Yang Berusaha Puan Wan Noraidah binti Wan Mohd Zain, Chairperson of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children and Deputy Director General at the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women and Community Development, Malaysia)



“ It is in this strength of families that children find their own strength. And when children are empowered, societies thrive.

(Robert Gass, UNICEF Representative, Malaysia)



“ Let this BICON be the moment when our collective energy converts into measurable outcomes for children and youth across Asia. Together, we choose care. Together, we choose family. Together, we move toward a brighter future for every child.

(Dr Kiran Modi, Founder of BICON and Founder and Managing Trustee, Udayan Care, India)



“ Today, as we live in a world marked by conflict, climate crisis, economic instability, all these situations are creating immense pressure on our families and communities across Asia and beyond. But at the same time, we have witnessed extraordinary resilience from young people, children and communities who are still protecting their children and families with such limited resources.

(Anju Pun, Country Director, Forget Me Not, Nepal)



“ Let’s shine together, rise together, and rebuild a future where every care-experienced young person is seen, heard and empowered.

(Surja, BICON Care Experienced Reference Group and Udayan Care, India.) ”

“ Every child deserves a family because care begins with connection. Care reform is not just a policy change. It is a shift in mindset from managing children in institutions to nurturing them. Malaysia journey is ongoing but our direction is clear. Family first always.

(Dr Sopian Brahim Director of the Department of Children’s Development, Department of Social Welfare, Malaysia) ”

“ Momentum requires vision, political will and collaboration. At the NACC, we dedicate our work and our hearts to this cause Our mission is to find them their forever loving homes because nothing we do for children is ever wasted. Every child deserves love and every child matters.

(Ms Imelda Ronda Ronda Director III - Operations and Services, National Authority for ChildCare – NACC, The Philippines) ”

“ I am always little disturbed when this concept of alternative care and care reform is seen from a charity welfare approach. I believe we need to change that into a totally rights-based approach. It’s not that children are “best” in a family, it’s the right of children to grow up in a caring family.

(Dr Rinchen Chopel Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child CRC and Director General of SAIEVAC, Bhutan) ”

“ Government leadership is essential to lay the foundation and the strengthen the system in place to deliver care reform. We have talked about and we hear again and again that we need to make a systematic change. So the government has a very important role to make sure that there is a system in place to deliver care reform for children at scale.

(Mikiko Otani, President of Child Rights Connect and former Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Japan) ”

“ Not all care leavers are blessed to have a mentor to guide them, to journey with them until they become stable. This makes it difficult to compete with peers who do have family support. Because children living with their family, always have someone to rely on to seek advice, support or counselling.

(Eric Sivanesh, BICON Care Experienced Reference Group, Malaysia) ”

“ The journey through crisis is never easy, especially for children. But with right support, I believe we can build a system that truly cures. Because it is always about rising stronger and shining together. In every crisis, resilience begins with connection. If we strengthen families, we strengthen society. If we protect a child today, we build a safer environment for them all tomorrow.

(Birendra Shahi, BICON Care Experienced Reference Group and Shine Together, Nepal)



“ Institutionalisation causes trauma. Trauma is not about what happens to you. It is about what happens inside you as a result of what happens to you. And for these children growing in institutions, that trauma is continued. And the impact does not disappear with age. It manifests in adulthood in countless painful and destructive ways. We must stop rationalising institutionalisation as the best available option.

(Datin Elya Lim Abdullah, Trustee, OrphanCare Foundation, Malaysia)



“ Let's also talk about the resilience of care experienced youth. They learn resilience differently. Without a family to fall back on, they build their own circles of belonging. Peer care leaver networks become their own family resource and mentorship and state programmes fill some of gaps. Many of those in care leaver networks or associations transform their pain into purpose by helping others. Still let us be honest resilience alone is not enough. Care leavers need structure financial independence and emotional healing.”

(Mausumi Das, BICON Care Experienced Reference Group, India)



“ At BICON we have heard resounding support for various forms alternative care like foster care and kinship care and of course a big resounding 'no' to institutional care.

(Brianchi Upadhyaya, SOS Children's Villages International, India)



“ Support to children with disabilities is too often seen as an act of kindness rather than a responsibility of the state and the community. This mindset reinforces dependency instead of promoting dignity and inclusion. What's needed is a fundamental shift—from sympathy to dignity, from welfare to inclusion.

(Sachin Kumar, Hope and Homes for Children, India)



BICON 2025 – KUALA LUMPUR RECOMMENDATIONS

(WITH QUOTES FROM THE BICON STAGE)

“ While we say family is the foundation of society, children and young people are the foundation of a nation.

These collective recommendations, from the 2 days of BICON show the pathway for the care reform we all envision. This should not be limited to reports or paper, we need action. Together let us commit to transforming these recommendations into real lasting changes that safeguard and ensure every child’s right to grow up in a safe, supportive and loving family environment where adulthood is no longer about re-imagining the childhood that was once lost. Protecting childhood is building the nation.

(Junu Lama – BICON Care Experienced Reference Group, Shine Together, Nepal)



THEME 1 – CHILDREN’S RIGHTS, PARTICIPATION & INCLUSION

1. **Support children and young people’s right to meaningful participation and co-leadership** in all decisions affecting them, ensuring the voices of those with care experience drive the design, governance and evaluation of policies and programmes – paying particular attention to ensuring gender inclusion.
2. **Create direct pathways between care-experienced children and young people and power holders**, ensuring meaningful participation of care leaver associations, children still in alternative care, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), and other representative groups from the earliest design stage – not just during consultation or implementation.
3. **Strengthen coordination between disability and child rights actors**, ensuring that all care reform is disability-inclusive and grounded in the social and human rights models of disability.

“ If they don't give you a seat, bring your own chair.
We are organising, advocating and leading.

*(Barma Magar – BICON Care Experienced
Reference Group, Shine Together, Nepal)*

”



“ Inclusion begins when care leavers are not invited to speak
but trusted to lead. Inclusion is not just about giving us space,
it is about sharing power and trust.

*(Mausumi Das, BICON Care Experienced
Reference Group, India)*

”

THEME 2 – FAMILY STRENGTHENING, PREVENTING SEPARATION AND ENABLING REINTEGRATION

4. **Support and strengthen families holistically**, through positive parenting programmes, social protection, economic empowerment, mental health care, psychosocial support and community-based networks.
5. **Invest in inclusive social protection systems** that ensure the rights and entitlements of each family member, prevent family separation and reduce financial stress. Economic hardship is a major driver of family separation.
6. **Invest in kinship care as a core pillar of family strengthening and reintegration**, including financial support, mental health services, caregiving support and strong national policy frameworks.
7. **Accelerate care reform in Asia** by prioritising reintegration, kinship care and alternative family care such as foster care and adoption. These are essential parts of transforming care systems and ending institutionalisation.

“ Every child deserves not just care, but connection. Not just a roof, but a loving family.

(Ranjana Srivastava: Associate Director Advocacy, Research & Training, Udayan Care, India)



“ Many kinship caregivers are elderly grandparents with no income. Families live in single room homes without clean water or toilets. Medical costs for disabled children force families into debt. Caregivers are sometimes forced to send children to work to survive.

(Shakil Ahmed, BICON Care Experienced Reference Group and CSID, Bangladesh)



“ Care doesn't always come from systems, it comes from people and families who step up quietly.

(Rija Maharjan, Himalayan Innovative Society, Nepal)



“ Poverty and any crisis should never be the reason for child separation. [...] Families can be supported through counselling, parenting guidance and community networks even during times of crisis..

(Datin Elya Lim Abdullah, OrphanCare Foundation, Malaysia)



“ We are promoting family resilience and sustainable community-led approaches to prevent family separation and let us ensure that no child grows without love, no woman without dignity and no family without hope.

(Babita Patra, State Commission for Child Protection, Odisha, India)



THEME 3 – WORKFORCE, SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING & ENABLING CONDITIONS

8. **Strengthen the child protection workforce** by expanding and training social workers and frontline professionals at all levels, especially at the community level, and investing in peer learning focused on prevention of family separation and family strengthening.
9. **Invest in enabling conditions for care reform**, including research, international learning, data systems, pilots, innovations, and digital case management platforms to ensure efficiency and accountability.
10. **Harness technology, digital tools and data tracking**, adopting digital platforms for case management to ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability. Ensure access to digital literacy training for young people leaving care.
11. **Establish and sustain multi-stakeholder engagement to maintain progress**, connecting families, communities, civil society, governments, and international partners – because no actor can drive care reform alone.

“ I also want to talk about the issue of the overburdened and under prepared caregivers. These workers are the core of the care system; they also need support. Sometimes they are overworked and stretched beyond their limits. If they are not physically and mentally well, how can they give the children the support that we need? So that’s why I believe that it’s important to create the space for comprehensive caregiver training and well-being programmes.

(Ngoc Anh, BICON Care Experienced Reference Group, Vietnam)



“ Every child deserves a beginning filled with love. Not labels. Not loneliness. Not lost opportunities. Whether through family reunification, alternative care, or inclusive community support, the goal is the same: To help every child feel safe, grow strong, and know they belong. Because in those early years, what we invest—not just in food or shelter, but in connection and care—shapes not only their future, but ours as a society.

(Siti Masyitah Rahma, Muhammadiyah, Indonesia)



“ We should not let facilities providing care for children be unregistered because if they are unregistered, we will not be able to monitor them and we cannot ask them to follow ASEAN standards and Article 9 of CRC. Article 9 of CRC gives highest priority to the parents and family of the children and states that children shall not be separated from their parents against their will.

(Wanchai Roujanavong, Former Representative of Thailand to the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women (ACWC), Thailand)



“ Evidence only unlocks reform when it is grounded in humility, co creation and respect for local wisdom. Data may give us the map, but community gives us the compass. If we engage as humble learners, listen and adapt, then reform will not just be implemented nor imported. It will be owned, sustained and transformative.

(Khadijah Madihi Senior Advisor, Child Protection Asia at ISS, Singapore)



“ There is a need to simplify assessment frameworks for children and caregivers, ensure access to data-driven evidence, strengthen advocacy through global collaboration, and adopt relational and transformational approaches to enable inclusive and sustainable care reform.

(Dr. Gurneet K. Kalra, Manager: Advocacy, Research & Training, Udayan Care, India)



THEME 4 – AFTERCARE, TRANSITION & LONG TERM SUPPORT

12. **Guarantee aftercare as a RIGHT, not a favour** – including targeted social protection assistance to ensure safe transition, housing, education, health care, counselling, career guidance and employment pathways such as quotas.
13. **Ensure lifelong access to mental health and psychosocial support** for all children and young people – in care, during transition, and after leaving care. Because healing is lifelong.
14. **Provide easy and universal access to legal identity and personal records**, including birth certificates, case files and key documents – for children without parental care, children still in care and care leavers. This should be actively supported by government and local authorities.



“ We go through so much, we have mental and emotional hardship as well. Myself I feel anxious just thinking about applying for another legal documentation. Because in my mind I know that it’s going to take longer time than it would for other people. It’s going to cost me. The questions I do not want to answer like what is your mother’s name? What is your father’s name? They think it’s so common, oh, everyone has it. But no, I don’t. And it’s not my fault. It’s no child’s fault.

(Nisha Chauhan, BICON Care Experienced Reference Group, Shine Together, Nepal) ”



“ Most care institutions discharge children when they reach eighteen. No formal programme exists to teach life skills and financial literacy. There is limited or no access to vocational training, this means it is hard to get decent jobs and there are psychological and emotional challenges, legal and policy gaps. And care leavers face pressure to become economically self-sufficient while female care leavers also face risk of exploitation and early forced marriages.

(Nazakat Ali, BICON Care Experienced Reference Group, Care Leaver Network - Social Research and Development Organization, Pakistan) ”



“ Redefining myself is not about forgetting what happened. It’s about choosing what I do with it. Maybe that’s what ‘rediscovering self’ truly means: not finding who you once were, but creating who you are meant to be. [...] Please do not just ask us what happened. Ask us who we are becoming.

(Anisa BK, BICON Care Experienced Reference Group, Shine Together, Nepal) ”



“ Our whole life in the institution has been like a timetable. Eight o’clock you do this. Nine o’clock you do this. Then you do this, then you do this. At the age of eighteen we give you the keys to the city and suddenly you get to decide what you can have for dinner. I had cereals for dinner. I didn’t have an auntie telling me you can’t have cereals for dinner.

(Dr. Eric Sivanesh, BICON Care Experienced Reference Group, Malaysia) ”

THEME 5 – LEGAL, POLICY & ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORKS

15. **Strengthen and review legal and policy frameworks related to care reform** – ensuring child-centred, accountable, gender-sensitive laws and procedures on alternative care placement, adoption, aftercare and disability and gender inclusion.
16. **Strengthen and monitor foster care systems**, ensuring legal clarity, strong policies, safety standards and caregiver support – including for specialist foster care for children with disabilities, refugees, migrants, children with parents in conflict with the law and other minority groups.
17. **Build political will and embed clear accountability**, including monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of policies and budgets allocated to care systems and aftercare, to ensure long-term, sustainable care reform.

“ The Capacity Building for Social Workers and Foster Parents in Handling Foster Children with Disabilities program ensures that caregivers are fully equipped to address each child’s unique emotional, developmental, and physical needs. Through these interventions, we aim to create nurturing, responsive, and inclusive families where every child can thrive.

(Imelda Ronda, Director III - Operations and Services, National Authority for Child Care – NACC, The Philippines)



“ There are so many different aftercare programmes and sometimes these are not maintained because of funding. This means that support can drop off completely and suddenly. Support programmes should be long term, so we see real impact. It is important for example that social workers or case workers follow progress and remain a contact point during after care challenges.

(Surja, BICON Care Experienced Reference Group, Udayan Care, India)



“ We see a promising trend in the number of children reunited with their families or placed into alternative family-based care in Cambodia. Smooth and safe reintegration of children – especially when RCIs self-close without government involvement – requires robust government oversight mechanisms.

(Phi No, Director of Child Protection Department, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Cambodia)



“ Bangladesh’s care reform, represents a national movement toward inclusion, resilience and child well-being, with a firm commitment to strengthening family-based care so that every child can grow up in a safe, nurturing family environment.

(Md Saidur Rahman Khan Director General, Department of Social Services (DSS), Ministry of Social Welfare, Bangladesh)



THEME 6 – FINANCING, PHILANTHROPY & REGIONAL ACTION

18. **Amplify philanthropy and pooled regional funds** and build public awareness of the need for sustainable investment in child protection and care reform and of the harms of institutionalisation.
19. **Deepen regional collaboration with cross-border action** on trafficking, illegal adoption, and shared care reform challenges through ongoing partnerships and knowledge exchange.
20. **Ensure regional leadership and government commitments** – with regional bodies such as ASEAN and SAIEVAC taking action to promote and support care reform. Countries should sign the Global Charter on Care Reform, and sustain forums like BICON and establish regional care leaver forums to monitor progress and drive accountability working in close collaboration with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and other UN treaty bodies.

“ Philanthropy acts as a catalyst. It is not permanent; it is not the last resort. And philanthropy should be phased out when the problem is solved. Philanthropy is just a bridge. It’s just a tool. It is a way for the government and the state to take ownership of an issue because they should be funding it. The best philanthropy is not just about giving money, but it’s about solving problems and then going away.

(Dato’ Dr Hartini Zainudin, Co-Founder of Yayasan Chow Kit, Malaysia)



“ When philanthropy moves from being a donor to becoming an enabler of systems, early innovations can evolve into lasting, government-adopted solutions.

(Rishad Surti, Manager – DASRA, India)



“ We need more equitable models that directly support and invest in locally led efforts, because those closest to communities understand their needs best.

(Lopa Bhattacharjee, Director of Alliance Programme, Family for Every Child, India)



PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE TO ACCESS THE GLOBAL CHARTER ON CARE REFORM - AN INITIATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, PRESENTED AT BICON



FINAL REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

“ At BICON, we listened to young people who turned pain into purpose, to governments who recognised the urgency of care reform for children, and to practitioners, researchers and leaders who showed us that change is not only possible, it is already happening, often despite the difficult funding context. But none of this will matter if these words stay here, inside a report. None of this will matter if we don't shout about it. Because the voices we heard at BICON were clear: No more children growing up unseen in orphanages. No more families breaking from preventable crises. No more care experienced young people stepping into adulthood alone.

We have the evidence. We have the recommendations. But most importantly, we have the makings of a movement—one built on lived experience, shared purpose, and a belief that every child deserves a safe, loving family. The future we want for children in Asia will not be built by words alone. It will be built by what each of us chooses to do next. Together.

(Tessa Boudrie, Hope and Homes for Children, Chair of the BICON Organising Committee)”



“ When we first imagined BICON in 2014, it began with a fundamental question as a practitioner: how do we ensure that every child, regardless of circumstance, grows up in a safe, nurturing family environment? At that time, institutional care was often the default response for children without parental care, while family-based solutions were still underexplored. Over the years, however, growing global awareness and advocacy have strengthened the movement for care reform, reinforcing the understanding that children belong with families whenever it is safe and possible, and that systems must support families and communities while preparing young people leaving care to lead dignified adult lives.

BICON has since evolved into a vibrant Asian platform for advancing care reform, bringing together policymakers, practitioners, organisations and care-experienced young people. At its core, it stands for three key principles: recognising young people with lived experience as experts who shape programmes and policy dialogue; promoting innovation and evidence to transition from institutional care to family-based alternatives; and elevating Asian perspectives to enrich global conversations on child care systems.

While progress is being made across many countries, important gaps remain. We still need stronger data systems on children in alternative care, greater investment in aftercare support for young people transitioning into adulthood, and stronger local capacities to support families and prevent unnecessary institutionalisation. Let this BICON be the moment when our collective energy converts into measurable outcomes for children and youth across Asia.

(Dr Kiran Modi, Founder of BICON and Founder and Managing Trustee of Udayan Care, India)



“ As we are now in the 6th BICON, it’s probably time to review our progress, identify gaps and also see how best to outline implementation or mainstreaming strategies of what has happened till now or what we have agreed to do till now without reinventing the wheel again and again. Between BICON 6 and 7 let’s do more to enhance the visibility and dissemination of the BICON outcome documents. Let’s convene national and sub regional review and advocacy events so that governments and other interested parties can be targeted and monitored.

A regional summit of care leavers or care experienced young people would be an excellent way of moving the agenda forward and expanding the networks and partnerships and also ensuring that concrete action is taken. The BICON committee and care leaver networks should keep a watch on countries that are coming to report to the CRC Committee and provide specific recommendations and questions that the CRC committee members can address to the governments when they come to have dialogue with us. That will keep the strategic interventions rolling and give us also an opportunity to monitor as we go forward by ensuring that those things come into the concluding observations.

Now, in conclusion, one thing that I will take away is this emotional connection from all that I’ve heard here. Care and protection of children is not optional; it is fundamental to just peaceful and inclusive societies. It is essential to meeting any goal, whether it’s global, regional or national, and to nurturing a generation that can live free from fear, abuse, exploitation and neglect to end violence against children. We need more than policies. We need awakened hearts. Hearts that will not allow war to steal a child’s laughter. Hearts that understand the sacredness of every child and their right to joy. Hearts that are open to seeing every child as our child. And hearts that feel for every child as we feel for our own. I am grateful for each of you and for your hearts of love that bring us together to this very important event and the movement.

The window for action is now or rather it was yesterday or it was last year. But the fact is that we are here and we are willing to commit. I want to thank the steering committee of BICON for remembering the many committed champions who are for the cause, who are here in this hall, and also those who could not make it to this event, but send their spirit and goodwill. I also salute the 34 young champions who are here. And I believe that they are the soul of the BICON movement. And we need to invest and support these young change makers.

(Dr Rinchen Chopel, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child CRC and Director General of SAIEVAC, Bhutan) ”



“ At this BICON we have tabled many problems - the challenges which we faced. Since the last BICON, we have seen many improvements and good practices. We have built so much but it is still patchy. Here are a few of the gaps we still see:

Let's help social workers so that they can be equipped to correct that patchwork and fill the gaps.

Few organisations are supporting after care – that is what happens to people at 18 when they leave the care home. There are huge gaps in education, health and housing for us – especially at this moment in our lives.

I notice the importance of peer support that people get through care leaver networks. We have seen examples of many different care leaver networks in different countries; they are even working directly with government like in Sri Lanka. This is good learning from BICON for all care leaver networks, that we should tie up with the government, with the CSOs so that we can scale up the impact that we have. Really, it's very important that is said here how important these partnerships are. Then they have stressed the importance of recognising and inclusion of the care leavers in the policy making.

So, these are all the important points served here - and when we do this let's also ensure we reach all care experienced people across our countries, there are different realities in remote and rural areas that need to be understood better. As we seek to build sustainable care leaver networks we should also seek to have regional and district level centres to support people with after care needs.

I would also add a recommendation to governments that they look into providing work opportunities including within the government sector. Many care leavers struggle with exams and find it hard to get a job, this could be a great way to ensure that we have stable futures.

(Albert Justin, BICON Care Experienced Reference Group and Miracle Foundation, India) ”



“**Firstly**, I was deeply moved by the strong partnership with young care leavers at the centre of BICON. Thirty-four young people from seven countries helped shape this conference, and I congratulate the organising committee for placing them at the heart of it. These two days began with a powerful opening statement from two young care leavers, and throughout the event we continued to hear their voices—clear, consistent and determined. They told us they do not want to be heard only as storytellers; they want to be part of decision-making. We take that message seriously.

I also want to share my own perspective. Your stories are inspiring, convincing and motivating for all of us who work for children. In my role as a former member and Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, I often speak about international frameworks, legal standards and global guidelines. We all know the Convention on the Rights of the Child is a legally binding document: every child has the right to grow up in a family, to an identity, to parental care, and not to be separated unless absolutely necessary. Governments are responsible for ensuring that alternative care is provided, with family-based care always the priority.

But a legal document, however powerful, needs a heart—and that is what your stories give it. Each of you has a unique experience that now lives in my mind and will shape the way I speak about these issues in the future. Your courage in sharing such personal, often painful experiences is extraordinary, and it is clear you did so not for yourselves, but for the children still living in institutions. You reminded us that while you cannot change your past, you can use your voices to change the future.

I was especially touched by your empathy and solidarity. I also appreciated your reminder that we should not expect children in institutions to become ‘powerful leaders’ or ‘top professionals,’ but simply good people and good citizens—a goal that sounds simple yet is profoundly meaningful. Your experiences show what it truly means when a child grows up without a family, how it affects life long after childhood, even across generations.

So, I offer my deepest appreciation. What you shared today is not just storytelling—it is a call to action. Your voices will help drive real policy change and reform.



Secondly, we all know what needs to be done—and I hope we all agree on that. We've talked at length about what is required. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1989, and the Committee began its work in 1991. Over the years, the Committee has held several Days of General Discussion on important themes. In 2005, we focused on alternative care, which led to recommendations and ultimately to the UN General Assembly's Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in 2009.

But even after that, discussions continued. In 2021, the Committee held a second Day of General Discussion on this theme, and for me, that was a moment of real change—because the care leaver community came forward and told the Committee directly what we needed to hear. It was a powerful turning point.

Today, I hear the same clear calls for action: prevent separation and support families; address the root causes of separation such as poverty; strengthen community partnerships and collaboration; ensure mental health support; support care leavers and caregivers; invest in the social service workforce and data systems; strengthen gatekeeping and monitoring. These are calls for change, for implementation, for real action. The time for talking is over—it is time to work together. I've heard, again and again, the importance of co-leadership and co-partnership. You are leading, and you are calling on us to stand with you as genuine partners. It may sound obvious, but this really is the moment for implementation, action and accountability. I also want to share a reflection on power. Governments hold power—and yes, we need laws, policies, budgets, case management systems, data collection and monitoring. But governments are not alone. Many of us hold different forms of power. As a former member of the Committee, I had the power of voice—speaking through the Convention itself. Civil society has the power of technical expertise and lived practice. Practitioners have the power of day-to-day experience. Philanthropy holds the power to resource change—not just by giving money, but by shifting social norms.

And I want to remind the young care leavers: you have power, too. As Justin said yesterday, no one can deliver this alone. Our strength lies in working together.

Thirdly, thinking about the future of BICON, I checked my emails this morning to see when I first became involved. I spoke at BICON 2021, joined the Government Roundtable in 2022, and participated again in 2023—but always online. This is my first time attending in person, and finally seeing everyone gathered here has been truly wonderful. I am amazed by how BICON has grown: a platform led by civil society, now joined by practitioners, UNICEF colleagues, government representatives, and even Committee members. My sincere congratulations to everyone who has shaped this space.

Looking ahead, I want to reflect on how we often talk about global frameworks—like the Convention and the Alternative Care Guidelines. We tend to think only about aligning national laws and policies with these frameworks. But what matters just as much is implementation. BICON should be proud of what it has built, and I hope that future discussions become even more action-oriented.

That said, discussion still has value. It motivates us, strengthens our resolve, and reminds us of our shared belief that every child deserves a family. It sounds simple, but it is anything but easy. This is why we must continue working together—joining hands, collaborating, and ensuring BICON remains a space where young care leavers are central. They know, better than anyone, what works and what does not. I feel privileged to be part of the BICON community—or as someone said, the ‘BICON family.’

My humble suggestion is that CRC Committee members should always be invited to BICON. It is powerful for them to witness how strong and vibrant this platform has become across Asia. My hope is that this collaboration continues not only regionally but at national levels too. I am sorry that during the last session I could not take more questions, but I hope those conversations continue between governments, young people with lived experience, and civil society.

As Rinchen reminded us, we must monitor what we actually achieve from these discussions. I hope to return for the next BICON. Thank you again to the organisers, the Government of Malaysia, UNICEF Malaysia, and all partners. And especially to the young care leavers who shared such powerful stories—thank you.

Ms. Mikiko Otani, President of Child Rights Connect and Former Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Japan)



Please review the **full report from BICON 2025** here www.bicon.asia



VIDEOS OF **ALL SESSIONS** ARE AVAILABLE HERE



A VIDEO OF **DAY 1 HIGHLIGHTS** IS AVAILABLE HERE



A VIDEO OF **DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS** IS AVAILABLE HERE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to thank everyone who made BICON such a success:

CARE EXPERIENCED PEOPLE

BICON is committed to centring the voices of those with lived experience of care in discussions about care reform and we strive to become a mutually accountable, truly co-produced event. Care-experienced people are the beating heart of BICON and we sincerely recognise the emotional, financial and personal commitment of every young person who chooses to commit time to planning BICON and to sharing their personal stories on the stage. BICON recognises this commitment by the payment of a stipend.

GOVERNMENTS

We would also like to express our thanks to the government dignitaries from Cambodia, Philippines, India, Bangladesh, United Kingdom and of course Malaysia for your support of BICON and sharing your experiences and ideas so wholeheartedly. We all know how important governments are in ensuring that change happens and this partnership with governments is something that BICON cherishes. A special thank you to the Government of Malaysia, especially the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and the Department of Social Welfare, for their incredible support for BICON and for hosting us in Kuala Lumpur.

SPONSORS

A shout out to the Martin James Foundation who have been by our side at the last two BICONS and Het Weeshuis der Doopsgezinden who came on board to support us this year.

FRIENDS OF BICON

Those organisations who supported participation of those with lived experience of care at BICON – in particular The Global Foundation for Care Fellows by Experience and also the Miracle Foundation and Keystone Human Services International and others.

MENTORS

Dr. Rinchen Chopel and Mikiko Otani for your ongoing friendship to BICON. Your support and guidance to BICON over the years has been invaluable.

THE BICON PARTNERS

Family for Every Child, Forget Me Not, Hope and Homes for Children, SOS Children's Villages International and Udayan Care. (Joined for the 2025 BICON by UNICEF Malaysia.)

TEAM BICON

The BICON Organising Committee and the BICON care – experienced co-ordination group who worked together as one team to deliver a successful event – with different committees focusing on content, communications, logistics and fundraising.

Shebeeb Ahammed – Hope and Homes for Children

Shakil Ahmed – BICON Care-experienced co-ordination committee

Lopa Bhattacharjee – Family for Every Child

Tessa Boudrie – Hope and Homes for Children (Chair of the organising committee)

Ruma Budha Magar – BICON Care-experienced co-ordination committee

Vuthaya Charoenpol – SOS Children’s Villages International

Surja – BICON Care-experienced co-ordination committee

Severine Chevrel – Consultant for UNICEF Malaysia

Dr. Gurneet Kalra – Udayan Care

Rajeev Kumar – SOS Children’s Villages International

Sachin Kumar – Hope and Homes for Children

Nimali (Nimmu) Kumari – BICON Care-experienced co-ordination committee

Su-Anne Lee – UNICEF Malaysia

Filipe Meirelles – Family for Every Child

Dr. Kiran Modi – Udayan Care (Founder of BICON)

Andrea Nave – Forget Me Not

Shankar Pradhan – BICON Care-experienced co-ordination committee

Leena Prasad – Udayan Care

Anju Pun – Forget Me Not

Nicole Ristic – Family for Every Child

Nolan Quigley – Hope and Homes for Children

Mark Riley – Hope and Homes for Children

Haritha Semassinghe – BICON Care-experienced co-ordination committee

Ranjana Srivastava – Udayan Care

Dikshya Thapa – BICON Care-experienced co-ordination committee

Andrea Thompson – Family for Every Child

THE BICON CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE REFERENCE GROUP

The BICON Care Experienced Young People Reference Group worked alongside this team every step of the way as we planned this event together. They were joined by many more care experienced young people who took centre stage at BICON.

THANKS ALSO TO

- Saskia Blume, Su-Anne Lee, Elinna Abdul Kadir, Wani Nur Imannina, Rachel Choong and the entire team at UNICEF Malaysia for their tireless work and enthusiasm for bringing BICON to Malaysia.
- Dr. Satish Ranggayah, Puan Nazifah binti Jusoh, Encik Muhammad Hafiez bin Mazlan and Encik Muhammad Ammar Rafiq bin Ruslan from the International Division, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia, for their invaluable collaboration and coordination.
- Nicole Ristic and Gemma Gilham at Family for Every Child for their practical support in Kuala Lumpur and support for logistical arrangements for the participation of care experienced people.
- Shebeeb Ahammed, Katharine James, Brian Daly, Lloyd Ernest at Hope and Homes for Children for their support with communications and design.
- Pooja Udayan, Purnima Jindal, Rija Maharjan, Tashi Dhondup Lama, Severine Chevrel, Nolan Quigley, Ranjana Srivastava, Gurneet Kalra, Nicole Ristic, Vuthaya Charoenpol and Anju Pun for acting as rapporteurs.
- Mr. Shankar Pradhan – BICON Care Experienced Reference Group, India for his excellent moderation of the care experienced takeover session.
- The dedicated team at MEP Meeting & Exhibition Planners (MEP Malaysia) our partners in delivering BICON – for their truly incredible work.
- The team at the Aloft hotel in Kuala Lumpur.
- Nolan Quigley, report author who worked as a consultant on behalf of and with the BICON Organising Committee during February 2026.

SAFEGUARDING

The safety of all participants was a top priority. A dedicated Safeguarding Team ensured that the conference environment, content, and data practices followed the updated [2025 BICON Safeguarding and Data Protection Policy](#). A safeguarding desk, dedicated email, phone number, and WhatsApp account were made available and monitored throughout the conference. Health and well-being support was provided. No serious safeguarding incidents were reported. Suggestions for strengthening future safeguarding and wellbeing measures have been documented in a safeguarding report which will be used in planning the next BICON. This report is available on the BICON web site.

6th **bicon** INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON ALTERNATIVE CARE **20**
FOR CHILDREN IN ASIA **25**

PARTNERS



Family
for every child



Forget Me Not

**HOPE
AND
HOMES
FOR
CHILDREN**

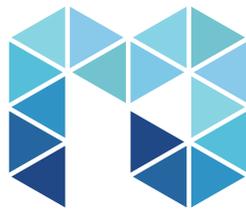


**SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES**

A logo consisting of a cluster of colorful dots in red, yellow, green, and blue.
UDAYAN
care | Where young
lives shine

unicef 
for every child

SPONSORS



Martin James
FOUNDATION



FRIENDS

**The Global
Foundation for
Care Fellows
by Experience**

A logo consisting of several dark blue vertical lines of varying heights, resembling a stylized arch or keystone.
KEYSTONE

A logo featuring a stylized orange and black figure that looks like a person or a plant with arms raised.
**MIRACLE
FOUNDATION**