



Eastern and Southern Africa regional learning platform on care reform

Monthly update - April 2022

Introduction

Welcome to the monthly update from the regional learning platform on care reform in Eastern and Southern Africa. The platform is an opportunity for policy makers and practitioners in Government, UNICEF and NGOs to exchange learning on care. The platform was established by UNICEF and Changing the Way We Care (CTWWC) and is supported by the consultancy firm Child Frontiers. Explore our past webinars and resources [here](#) and [here](#).

Announcements on the platform

explore the vital importance of ensuring that care systems developed in humanitarian settings adhere to national standards and contribute to the development of national care systems. Examples from Uganda and Kenya will illustrate how care systems in refugee camps can be aligned to the national care system. Join the Zoom meeting using this [link](#) (Meeting ID: 848 6371 8410 Passcode: 804529)

- **Helpdesk:** As part of the platform, we have set up a Helpdesk for UNICEF country office staff and government counterparts. For guidance on any aspect of care reform, please contact Emily Delap of Child Frontiers (edelap@childfrontiers.com) or Mona Aika from the UNICEF regional office (maika@unicef.org).
 - **An opportunity to share learning on care reform and COVID-19:** The next paper developed through the platform seeks to capture learning from COVID-19 on care reform in Eastern and Southern Africa. If you have examples of promising practice or valuable lessons learnt from the pandemic that you would like to showcase, or would like to learn from others' experiences during the pandemic please contact Emily Delap of Child Frontiers: edelap@childfrontiers.com.
 - **Small learning group on reintegration:** We are setting up a small group to meet virtually and share learning on supporting children's reintegration. This group is primarily aimed at government and UNICEF staff, though we would also like to draw on learning from NGOs. If you are interested, please contact Emily Delap: edelap@childfrontiers.com.
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Engaging those with lived experience in care reform

Involving people with lived experience is vital for pushing the care reform agenda forward. Care leavers and care givers offer first-hand experiences which fill in gaps in understanding and are powerful advocates for change. In Kenya, care leavers have formed the [Kenyan Society of Care Leavers](#) and have drafted policies, informed the public on the importance of care reform, and conducted research. Care leaver Bertha Lutome was recently employed as a peer-to-peer researcher on research designed to inform policies and programmes on care leavers. Through this and other experience advocating for care reform at the global level, Bertha was able to secure a Project Assistant role on the learning platform on care reform in Eastern and Southern Africa. Bertha says:

“I am glad that UNICEF engaged four care leavers from Kenya in the study on the experience of care leavers. This was an eyeopener for me since I got to learn about the challenges that my colleagues face while transitioning to alternative care and also draft recommendations that can make their lives better,”

Bertha and other care leavers in Kenya argue that the government, NGOs, and UN agencies should ensure the genuine participation of care leavers and fight against the manipulation of those with lived experience. This can be done, for example, by ensuring that they are paid for sharing their experiences and supporting care leavers to lead projects that advocate for care reform.

As well as involving care leavers in reform, there are increasing efforts in

Experienced foster carers reach out to prospective foster carers as part of recruitment campaigns. Foster carers and former staff from residential care homes also tell their stories during campaigns promoting family-based care (see for example this [article](#)).

Child's i have found that those with lived experience are the most effective advocates. Only through hearing real-life examples do policymakers truly believe that foster care offers a viable alternative to institutional care.

Find out more about how to engage those with lived experience in care reform by reading this [publication](#), watching a recording or our [webinar on this topic](#), or viewing this [short video](#).

Other news and resources

- **Sharing learning on kinship care:** [Family for Every Child](#) are developing global inter-agency guidance on how to effectively support kinship care. They are seeking promising practice examples of policies, guidance and programmes designed to support children in kinship care and their caregivers. Ideally these examples will already be documented in evaluations, research or case studies, but key informant interviews will also be carried out to document learning. If you have learning you would like to share, please message Gemma Gilham with a short description of the programme and any relevant documents (gemma.gilham@familyforeverychild.org).
- **Sharing learning on foster care:** The Global Policy and Advocacy Working Group within the the [Transforming Children's Care](#) global collaborative platform has embarked on developing a series of thematic briefs covering specific aspects of care reforms. One of these areas is foster care. A task force on foster care has been established to provide a platform for sharing and learning on foster care practice experiences from different contexts across the globe. We will be holding monthly spotlight webinars that focus on various aspects of foster care practice, followed by Task Force meetings to discuss the webinar topics in more depth to inform the Thematic Brief. We encourage and welcome people with lived experience of foster care, foster carers, practitioners, Government actors, and those interested in knowing more about the implementation of foster care services to join the Task Force. Join the Task Force and find out more [here](#) or contact Barbra Aber of CRS in Uganda who co-chairs the Task Force (barbra.aber@crs.org).

Want to share resources or advertise a webinar or event on care reform in Eastern and Southern Africa? Please contact Bertha Lutome of Child Frontiers: lutomeb@gmail.com

The learning platform was established by UNICEF Eastern and Southern African Regional Office (ESARO) in collaboration with Changing the Way We Care (CTWWC) and has been made possible by funding from USAID's Displaced Children and Orphans Fund through UNICEF ESARO.



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