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Eastern and Southern Africa regional learning platform on care reform

Monthly update - May 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

important for informing care reform, and how data can be collected and used effectively. We will have speakers from UNICEF head office and the Better Care Network and provide a detailed example on the importance of data in Uganda's care reform processes. Join the Zoom Meeting [here](#) (Meeting ID: 836 1956 7506, Passcode: 395589)

- **Do we need an online course on care reform? Share your views.** We are currently undertaking a feasibility study for an online training course in care reform in Eastern and Southern Africa. This course would be targeted at UNICEF, government and NGO partner staff and would be most suitable for those with little to medium-level previous knowledge of care reform. We want to find out if there is sufficient demand for this course and to ensure that it is relevant to your needs. If you would like to contribute your views please contact Bertha Lutome at lutomeb@gmail.com
- **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).



Children can easily become separated from their parents, relatives or usual caregivers in emergencies – whether rapid or slow in onset, or resulting from natural disasters, civil unrest or armed conflict. Lacking the care and protection of their families, unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) are at increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. Such children have urgent needs: to be identified, to be provided with appropriate alternative care and to be reunited with family, whenever possible--unless it is not in the child's best interest, or against their expressed wishes.

Accordingly, immediate and comprehensive response to the needs of these children is a priority in all emergencies. To be effective, these interventions should be implemented as part of a broader child protection response and integrated within national protection system. However, in many countries response to the alternative care needs of UASC generates parallel structures that are not aligned with the national protection and care systems.

A recent [webinar](#) delivered as part of the regional platform on care reform, focused on why creating linkage between care systems in development and humanitarian contexts is important, and how this can be done through promising practice examples from the region. This webinar showed that:

- Learning from care systems established in humanitarian contexts can inform national care systems (and vice versa)
- Preparing for the care needs of UASC must be a crucial part of both national disaster preparedness and care reform strategies. Care systems in humanitarian contexts should both shape and reflect national policies on care.
- Social workers and community volunteers from villages and towns close to refugee camps can be deployed to support USAC, but require extra training.
- Coordination bodies established to support care and protection at the national and local levels should be engaged in the care response in emergencies.
- Foster care systems established in refugee camps should adhere to national standards, with foster carers approved by government. However, national standards related to foster care may need to adjusted to reflect the specific needs of UASC.

A case study on kinship care in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya

15 year old Okot from South Sudan has been living with his Aunt Aamito in Kakuma refugee camp for four years. Aamito sees Okot as one of her own children:

"I even forgot that he is not my biological child, I have always seen him as my own child. All my children love him, and he also loves them, they are brothers and sisters. We face the challenges together as a family."

Okot also feels that he is part of the family, and appreciates the love and care that Aamito show's him:

"This mama [Aamito] is able to take care of me fully, without discrimination. I feel at home here....."

combination of regular food and cash payments from UN agencies, material support from the Danish Refugee Council which is funded by UNICEF, and Aamito's little income earned through washing clothes for other refugees. In addition to this material help, the family also receive case management support and Aamito has attended parenting classes run by the Danish Refugee Council and funded by UNICEF.

Aamito cares for Okot despite facing considerable difficulties in her own life. She is HIV positive having been raped by soldiers from a rebel group in South Sudan. Kakuma is also a challenging environment to bring up children, with frequent battles for resources such as water. The full version of Okot's story can be found [here](#), along with some other examples of kinship care in Kakuma. These case studies provide lessons relevant both to the care of UASC and national care systems. For example:

- Kinship care is the most common form of alternative care and support to this form of care must be prioritised
- Kinship care takes on multiple different forms and support needs vary greatly; these complexities must be reflected in care reform strategies.
- Caring for an additional child can be costly, and social protection systems should allocate resources to kinship carers.
- Some (but not all) children in kinship care need case management support as they are vulnerable to discrimination and abuse. Parenting programmes directed at this group can also help to reduce these risks.

Other news and resources

- **Want to showcase your work on kinship care?** The NGO Family for Every Child are developing global inter-agency guidance on kinship care and are seeking examples of promising practice. This is a great opportunity to potentially share your work on kinship with a wide audience. If you are interested, please contact [Gemma Gilham](#).
- **New resource on kinship care in Kenya:** Changing the Way We Care (CTWWC) have recently developed a case study on kinship care in Kenya. The study aims to help practitioners understand the practical implications of supporting kinship and other forms of family-based alternative care. The case study can be found [here](#).
- **Progress on supporting Kafalah in Kenya:** In February 2022, CTWWC in collaboration with UNICEF and Kadhi representatives supported the Directorate of Children's Services (DCS) and National Council for Children's Services (NCCS) to validate and finalise the National Framework for the Implementation of Kafaalah Care for Children

for the rollout of Kafaalah care in Kenya. CTWWC also held an official Kafaalah inauguration dinner with the County Commissioner's and Chief Kadhi Offices, Muslim Religious leaders and DCS.

- **Global Studies of Childhood Webinar #1: Responding to varied experiences of childhood separation - Wednesday 18th May - 12pm Kenya.** This is the first webinar on the "Separated Childhoods" themed edition of Global Studies of Childhood. It will explore the varied reasons children become separated from family and the importance of responses that are tailored to individual situations. Please sign up [here](#).
- **New manual on child and youth participation in care reform:** Putting Children and Young People at the Heart of Care Reform is an introductory manual aimed at practitioners. The manual provides a comprehensive overview of how to meaningfully engage children and young people in care reform. The manual can be found [here](#)

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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