



Eastern and Southern Africa regional learning platform on care reform

Monthly update - September 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

- **New webpage for the platform:** Please see the new webpage for the platform [here](#). The page includes all of the resources generated by the

- **New resource on lessons learnt on care reform from the COVID-19 pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic posed a fundamental threat to the care of children in Eastern and Southern Africa. It exacerbated many causes of separation and violence in families and placed a huge strain on services that aim to improve children's care. Responding to these challenges also led to rapid adaptation, innovation, and learning. We have developed three resources to document this learning: a [policy paper](#), a [short video](#), and a [webinar recording](#).
 - **Webinar recording: At the Core of Care - The social service workforce and care systems.** This webinar looked into the social service workforce and children's care. A moderated panel shared examples of: workforce strengthening; motivating, developing, planning and supporting the workforce; innovations in practice; and regional resources and tools. A recording of the webinar is available [here](#).
 - **New resources providing an introduction to care reform:** Although care reform is well established in some parts of the region, many countries in Eastern and Southern Africa are just beginning their care reform journey. This [short paper](#) explains what care reform is, the different components of care reform, why care reform is important and how to start a care reform process. The paper is accompanied by a [video](#) where experts from across the region explain what care reform is, why it is so important, how to begin care reform, and key lessons learnt on care reform.
 - **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).
-



The role of community volunteers in supporting care reform in Rwanda

The Inshuti z'Umuryango (IZU) are a network of around 30,000 volunteers operating in each village in Rwanda to support vulnerable children and their families. The IZU have played a vital role in Rwanda's successful care reform efforts including through:

- Preventing family separation by identifying and supporting particularly vulnerable households, including those with children with disabilities. IZU also provide family mediation in cases of conflict in the home, a key cause of family separation.
- Carrying out home visits to children recently reintegrated from residential care.
- Helping to identify, recruit and support foster carers.
- Running caregiver support groups.
- Raising awareness in the community about the harm associated with institutional care.
- Identifying children who have migrated without their families from rural to urban areas and promoting family reunification.
- Supporting child headed households, for example through creating linkages to informal community supports
- Supporting pregnant teenagers (who are especially likely to place their babies in residential care)

The IZU played a particularly crucial role in care reform during the COVID-19 pandemic when social workers were not able to travel freely to visit vulnerable families.

In cases of minor child abuse or neglect, IZU will often try and resolve problems through discussions with families or direct liaison with schools or other sources of support, such as community based organisations. In more extreme cases, including all cases involving sexual abuse, IZU refer cases to professionals in the police and social services. Each IZU is provided with guidance on how to determine when they should make a referral and on referral pathways. They document all cases that they identify. Through a digital reporting platform, they provide monthly reports of all cases

IZU are well organized with clear links to relevant government personnel. The IZU operate in pairs of one female and one male. Each pair produces a monthly report on their activities, which is shared through a digital reporting platform to the district social worker/psychologist copying cell and sector coordinators. The district social worker/psychologist regularly monitors activities and responds to any problems reported by the IZU. Cell and sector-level coordinators are selected through a vote by other IZU.

All IZU have received training on child safeguarding, their roles and responsibilities, referrals, reporting, child protection in emergencies, disability and inclusion, positive parenting and how to carry out home visits. Training is done in a cascade fashion, with Government and NGO partners training coordinators who then train IZU in each community. Although IZU are not paid for their work, research suggest that receiving some basic forms of support, such as a cell phone, data and transport costs, greatly enhances their effectiveness. More information on the IZU can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Other news and resources

- **New resource on *Kafalah* in Kenya:** This [short document](#) developed by Changing the Way We Care describes the process of ensuring *Kafaalah* is considered as a family-based alternative care option within Kenya and the work to promote best practice within the model. It describes the journey of developing a framework and standard operating procedures, beginning with the launch of the Kenyan Guidelines on the Alternative Family Care of Children in 2014.
- **Documenting the transformation of residential care in South Africa:** This [case study](#) developed by the Faith to Action Initiative documents the transformation of a residential care facility to a centre of community outreach and family support.

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: blutome@childfrontiers.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.

Copyright © 2022 UNICEF

Photo credit top image: © UNICEF/UN0306257/Soko
Photo credit second image: © UNICEF/UNI355506/Kanobana

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

This email was sent to contact@bettercarenetwork.org
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Child Frontiers · 7A Princes Rise · Lewisham · London, London SE13 7PW · United Kingdom

Grow your business with  mailchimp