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Eastern and Southern Africa regional learning platform on care reform

Monthly update - October 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

- **Webinar - Supporting kinship care in Eastern and Southern Africa:** Kinship care (care by extended family or friends of the family) is the most common form of alternative care in the region, yet also the least well supported. This webinar will explain why it is vital to invest in kinship care and provide examples of promising practice. **Date:** 26th of October. **Time:** 2.30-4pm Nairobi time. Zoom link can be found [here](#). Meeting ID: 814 9983 6148 Passcode: 365168
- **New videos:** In an effort to provide multiple ways to share learning on care in the region, we have developed two videos. In '[An introduction to care reform](#)' experts from Kenya and Rwanda explain the value and components of a care reform process, and provide practical advice for those just starting out on their care reform journey. In '[What has the Covid-19 pandemic taught us about care reform?](#)' policy makers and practitioners reflect on how learning from the pandemic can inform care reform moving ahead.
- **Tell us what you have gained from the platform and how it can be improved.** Please fill out this [short form](#) to let us know what you learnt from the platform, how this has impacted on your work and how we can improve in the future. This will only take 5 minutes and will help us make the platform more relevant to your needs.

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).



Investing in the social service workforce for care reform

By Changing the Way We Care

As demonstrated in our recent [webinar](#), investing in the social service workforce (SSW) is vital to care reform. The workforce support gatekeeping and care planning; reunification and reintegration of separated children; and the protection children from harm. They provide a system of support for children and families. Unfortunately, in many African countries, the workforce do not receive the respect and support that they deserve. They are usually underpaid, overworked and undervalued as a profession. There are also not enough social workers in many countries and they have huge caseloads.

There are many ways of investing in the social service workforce so that they can contribute more effectively to care reform including:

- Building a knowledge and skills framework and career structure to support the workforce and their progression, continuous training and mentorship.
- Investing in adequate remuneration for the care workforce commensurate with the amount of work and level of education and skills they possess. Increasing government domestic funding for the care workforce should be a priority.
- Developing and strengthening supervision structures and other supportive structures to promote self-care and cater for the mental health of the workforce.
- Creating a reward and recognition system to motivate the workforce in continuing to do the sensitive work they do.
- Establishing training routes and providing new training and entry routes for people who want to work with and care for children, including routes for paraprofessionals and community volunteers. Paraprofessionals and volunteers are a cost-effective way to extend care and protection services to the hardest-to-reach communities in Africa.
- Institutionalizing all these efforts by strengthening a government system that supports the professional, para-professional and volunteers engaged in the care and protection of children. You can find lessons on the institutionalizing of the care workforce in Rwanda [here](#).

In the face in an increase in challenges such as poverty, climate change, pandemics, epidemics, and conflicts that force the separation of children from their families, it imperative for governments to build a workforce with the right skills and knowledge to support high quality personalized care to children and families. It is also important for government to recognize and appreciate the value and dedication of the workforce in enabling the dignity and independence of families and children they support.

undermine all other efforts to strengthen the child care and protection system sustainably. For more information on ways of strengthening the social service workforce and a compelling case for investment in the social service workforce please refer to this Global Social Service Workforce Alliance and UNICEF [document](#). Find additional inspiration, tools and resources on strengthening the SSW [here](#).

Other news and resources

- **Case studies on care reform in Uganda and Zambia:** These two documents explore the work of the [Child's i Foundation](#) in Uganda and [Alliance for Children Everywhere](#) in Zambia in promoting care reform. Both agencies began by providing residential care, before becoming champions for de-institutionalisation and wider care reform in their contexts.
- **Join a global community of practice on kinship care.** The network Family for Every Child have set up a global community of practice on kinship care on their [Changemakers for Children Platform](#). They will shortly be sharing details of a six month learning series which will involve monthly webinar and other opportunities to share learning on kinship care. This will culminate in global guidance on kinship care. See [here](#) to join the community of practice.

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

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