

Changing THE WAY WE care

LEARNING BRIEF: Using data to inform national strategy

Introduction

Data related to children's care is lacking and even where it does exist, there are often questions about quality and reliability. Often when data is collected, it is not used well. Data—both quantitative and qualitative—is an important tool to guide and influence care reform.

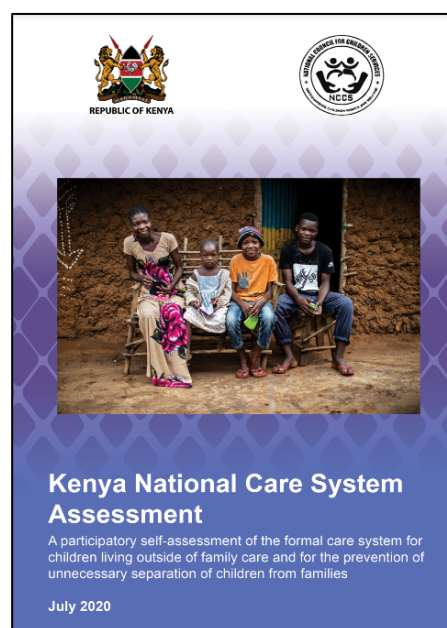
CTWWC believes that countries should conduct baseline studies including, at a minimum, key indicators such as the number of residential care facilities; number of children living in all forms of alternative care; the reasons for placement; age, sex, and place of origin; and the state of the care system (policies, workforce, finance, service standards, monitoring and evaluation standards, and social norms). This critical information informs strategy, policy change, practical guidance, and programming¹. CTWWC is investing in the tools and processes to collect, understand and encourage the use of these data.

Over the last three years, CTWWC has worked with governments and civil society actors in Guatemala, Kenya and Moldova to collect, analyze and use data: this includes situational analyses and census of residential care and social support services, gathering better data to track the movement of children in and out of care during the COVID-19 pandemic, and surveying public opinions. Across these efforts, CTWWC has seen that generating data for decision-making is most successful when end-users are carefully and meaningfully engaged from beginning to end.

Using data as part of a planned roadmap in developing a national care reform strategy in Kenya

In August 2021, senior leaders of the Government of Kenya endorsed the country's first National Care Reform Strategy and committed to funding it. The development of the strategy was led by the National Council of Children's Services (NCCS) with the support of a coordinated, multi-sectoral "Core Team" comprised of a range of government actors and representatives from civil society, including people with lived experience of care. As part of the process to bring actors together around care reform and build understanding and consensus on priorities, NCCS, with support from CTWWC, conducted a national care system assessment which resulted in 56 multi-sectoral recommendations to strengthen the national care system,¹ later reflected in the national strategy.

Factors to success in the use of the assessment results for strategizing include: 1) government leadership, 2) advocacy, 3) multi-sectoral coordination, and 4) implementing a participatory assessment method. The use of the assessment findings was more successful because the process started by advocating for a common vision through what we called a "Roadmap to Develop a National Strategy". This showed how the assessment could fit in to the larger



¹ CTWWC DGD submission

picture. CTWWC also engaged the Core Team in assessment planning and implementation, including their review and adaptations of the assessment framework for the Kenya context, which played a part in the ownership and use of the assessment results. Lastly, the assessment method itself – which brought together 20 government and 17 non-government stakeholders – built consensus and common understanding around the recommendations before the strategy development started. Although generating data in a way that considers these factors takes more time and resources, it improves how information is used in the end.

Bringing data into a process to develop a new child protection program in Moldova

As part of CTWWC Moldova, from September 2020 to June 2021, emphasis was placed on gathering data about the current situation of children in care and the legislative and financial provisions, available social services, faith actors and public knowledge and attitudes in relation to care reform. The aim was to ensure that CTWWC's future activities were accurately informed by data and to provide additional information to government and non-governmental actors. The research was led by key civil society actors – Partnerships for Every Child (P4EC), Child, Community, Family (CCF), Keystone Moldova – in consultation with the government actors. Towards the end of the research process the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection began working with a UNICEF-funded team of technical experts, led by the Alliance of NGOs Active in the Field of Child and Family Social Protection (APSCF), to develop the National Program for Child Protection 2022-2026 (NPCP) – a strategic framework, costed action plan, and monitoring and evaluation framework to guide the child protection sector to 2025. To avoid duplication and support alignment, CTWWC agreed with UNICEF, APSCF and the team of experts to integrate the data already gathered into the NPCP processes. CTWWC was added to the technical team developing the objectives and M&E plan of the NPCP and hosted a “world café” event in July 2021 to share the research findings with a range of care actors. This led to the development of a set of evidence-based priority actions for care reform linked to the objectives of the NPCP.



World Café in July 2021 to share research findings with care actors

We believe the ability of the CTWWC team to bring new data into this decision-making process will ensure the key strategic document for the next four years of child protection action in Moldova is evidence-based and has deeper collaboration uniting diverse stakeholders around a common agenda.

Conclusion

As CTWWC seeks to influence governments and their partners to prioritize care reform and systems of family-based alternative care and family strengthening, it's important to ensure that national actors value data and demand quality information to inform their decision-making. Our efforts to collaborate on improving data and supporting its use in the development of significant policies is a step in the right direction. We hope to continue to build demand for data to inform ongoing work so that part of CTWWC's legacy is sustainable systems for gathering and using data to drive care reform forward. There are exciting opportunities ahead in Guatemala, Kenya and Moldova to work collaboratively around use of case management data, through improved national management information systems, and building shared national M&E frameworks.

Need to know more? Contact *Changing the Way We Care* at info@ctwwc.org or visit changingthewaywecare.org

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