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Eastern and Southern Africa regional learning platform on care reform

Monthly update - October 2023

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, case studies, videos and policy papers

Announcements on the platform

- **Webinar recording:** Our last webinar looked at effective strategies for preventing family separation, drawing on examples from Namibia, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. A recording of the webinar can be found [here](#).
- **Webinar 29th of November - new global guidance on kinship care:** Our next webinar will introduce new global inter-agency guidance on kinship care. This guidance was developed in collaboration with a range of agencies including both UNICEF and Changing the Way We Care. During the webinar we will share key lessons learnt on how to support kinship care, drawing particularly on examples of promising practice from Eastern and Southern Africa. Date: 29th of November. Time: 3pm Nairobi/ 12noon Dakar. [Zoom link](#) Meeting ID: 819 9628 2047 Passcode: 589375
- **New resources on care reform in Kenya:** Our latest video on demonstration counties for care reform in Kenya has already had 185 views on our [youtube channel](#). Find out what everyone is so interested in [here](#). The video is accompanied by a short written case study which can be found [here](#).
- **Help us to evaluate the platform:** Over the last month, an independent evaluator has been busy interviewing UNICEF, government and NGO staff for an evaluation of the platform. A short survey has also been developed to help capture lessons learned and form recommendations for the future of the platform. This survey will be available for completion between 26 October and 9 November. You may access the survey [here](#). Thank you in advance for your input.
- **HelpDesk:** Do you have a dilemma about care reform? Would you like to know about how others have succeeded in their care reform efforts? Whether you are just starting out on your care reform journey or a long way down this road, we can help. As part of the learning platform, we offer a HelpDesk for all UNICEF and government staff in Eastern and Southern Africa. Please contact Emily: edelap@childfrontiers.com.



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How to prevent family separation

The importance of preventing separation from parents and other family members caring for them is recognised in global, regional and national policies and guidance. Preventing separation is also far more cost-effective than alternative care or reintegration. Yet, preventing separation is not being prioritised by all governments in the region, and there remains confusion around what the key components of effective prevention strategies are. In a new paper, soon to be published by the Regional learning platform, we draw on evidence from across Eastern and Southern Africa to explore lessons learnt on how to prevent family separation.

We identify a number of principles of good practice practice for strengthening families to prevent separation. For example, it is important to use of child-centred approaches which focus on the best interests of the child, and enable child and caregiver participation. Efforts should be made to identify and build on strengths within families. Strategies should actively seek to include discriminated against groups, particularly children with disabilities who are highly vulnerable to separation. Vulnerable families in Eastern and Southern Africa often rely on the wider extended family and community, with limited inputs from NGOs or government. These informal support networks must be understood and built. Reasons for separation are often complex and vary greatly by context, and prevention strategies should reflect these complexities.

means:

- A strong evidence base on reasons for separation and effective existing strategies for addressing this separation.
- Policies, strategies and guidance on prevention.
- Coordinated inputs from across a range of sectors, with the involvement of health, education, justice, social protection and child protection sectors particularly important.
- A social service workforce with the commitment and capacity to strengthen families.
- Prioritising prevention in the financing of care systems.
- Supportive social norms that promote family unity.

Our research shows that a range of services and support are required to prevent family separation in the region. Some prevention strategies need to be targeted at entire communities, and others require more intensive work with families and children. It is important to:

- Improve decision making around separation within families and communities and in more formal decision-making involving the gatekeeping bodies or residential care providers.
- Provide carefully targeted case management support for highly vulnerable children and families.
- Address root causes of separation, such as abuse, neglect and exploitation, poverty and lack of access to services.
- Build the capacity of parents and other caregivers in relation to childrearing.

Other news and resources

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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