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**From:** Emily  
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## Eastern and Southern Africa regional learning platform on care reform

Monthly update - July 2023

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### 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 [here](#) and [here](#). To sign up to these monthly updates, please complete this short [form](#).

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## Announcements on the platform

- **Webinar on case management and care reform- 26th July 2.00-3.45pm Nairobi / 11am-12.45pm Dakar:** The purpose of this webinar is to share knowledge and insights derived from country-specific experiences regarding case management for children without or at risk of losing parental care. During the webinar we will examine the contributions that case management can make to children's care, case coordination and case conferencing, integrated case management, managing case and workloads, and quality control in case management. **Portuguese and French interpretations will be provided.** Zoom [link](#) Meeting ID: 826 8393 4018 Passcode: 966278
- **Webinar recording - care leavers:** During this webinar, we shared findings from UNICEF and government research on care leavers in Kenya, and explored the peer-to-peer methodology used in this research. A webinar recording can be found [here](#)
- **Learning exchange on care reform in emergencies:** At the request of UNICEF Mozambique, we organised a learning exchange on care reform in emergencies between UNICEF and government staff in Mozambique and Kenya. A wide range of topics were explored, including the use of foster care for unaccompanied children, linking care systems in humanitarian and development contexts, and how to provide care for children previously associated with armed forces or groups. Any UNICEF or government staff in the region can request a similar learning exchange on any topic related to care via the HelpDesk (see below).
- **Seeking case management resources related to care.** In response to multiple requests, we will be developing a list of useful case management

resources that relate to children's care. If you have any guidance, toolkits or SOPs that on any aspect of children's care, please share with Ismael Ddumba-Nyanzi <[idnyanzi@childfrontiers.com](mailto:idnyanzi@childfrontiers.com)>

- **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](mailto:edelap@childfrontiers.com) or Mona: [maika@unicef.org](mailto:maika@unicef.org)



## Case management in care reform

Case management involves identifying vulnerable children and families, and a designated case manager working closely with these children and families to:

- assess the child and family to determine needs,
- develop a case plan that outlines how these needs will be met,
- support the implementation of the plan,

- monitor, review and adjust the plan, and
- close the case when the goals of the plan are achieved.

Effective case management can play a key role in ensuring that children at risk of separation or already without parental care get the help they need. In relation to preventing separation, case management can enable services and support for high risk cases or those with complex needs. Case management processes can help to determine if children need to be placed into alternative care, and which forms of care are best for them. Case management support is crucial for children in formal care arrangements such as foster care and residential care. It is used to identify and meet the needs of these children and their families, and to support reintegration back to families. Case management can also be of benefit to some children in informal kinship care arrangements who have been identified as at risk or who have complex needs.

Despite the valuable role that case management plays, it is neither necessary or appropriate for all children without adequate care. Case management is a long term process, and some problems can be resolved more quickly with one off interventions. Case management is resource intensive, and many children in kinship care or at risk of separation from parents don't need this individualised attention. Instead, they may require greater support from their wider family or community networks, or access to social protection, parenting programmes, or other services. Some causes of inadequate care are also better addressed at a group or community level. For example, discriminatory social norms against children with disabilities or attitudes that are supportive of residential care.

An over-emphasis on case management as a solution to inadequate care can lead to care reform programmes that are too focused on meeting the needs of a small number of children and families, and not enough on addressing the inadequate services, social norms or poverty behind inadequate care. Trying to provide individualised case management to all at risk groups can also quickly overwhelm already over-stretched social services. Some families are resistant to social work interference in family-life, and an insistence on case management interventions has been shown to put off prospective kinship carers.

All of this suggests that whilst case management is a vital component of care reform, its use should be measured.

Effective case management requires a strong care system. This includes legislation and guidance, a trained volunteer and professional social workforce with appropriate caseloads, proper coordination and referral mechanism, and adequate services.

Case management is already widely used in care reform processes in Eastern and Southern Africa, and much valuable learning and models of case management processes have been generated. Examples from the region and elsewhere in Africa include:

- [Integrating Case Management for Vulnerable Children: A process guide for Assessing and Developing an integrated case management system in Eastern and Southern Africa.](#)
- [Ghana's Inter-sectoral Standards Operating Procedures for Child Protection and Family Welfare](#)
- [Guidelines for Child Protection Case Management and Referral in Kenya](#)
- [Caseworker's Guidebook Case Management for Reintegration of Children into Family or Community Based Care - Kenya](#)
- [Operational Guidance on Inclusive Children's Reintegration in Rwanda.](#)
- [Case Management Standard Operating Procedures for Child Programming in Uganda](#)
- [Case Management Standard Operating Procedures for Children in Need of Care and Protection in Ghana](#)
- [Changing the Way We Care Learning Brief: The Importance of Integrating Family Strengthening, Reunification, Case Management and Workforce Strengthening](#)

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## Other news and resources

- **Mutual learning programme on family and community based care.** Mutual Learning believes in connecting care practitioners worldwide to inspire each other and mutually transform towards high quality family and community based care. The programme facilitates collaboration, dialogue and the exchange of experiences with an international community, via a digital platform and 6-month Mutual Learning Program. See [here](#) for more details.
- **Transforming children's care webinar series.** The Transforming children's care global collaborative platform has a series of 14 webinar recordings on multiple aspects of children's care. The most webinar has looked at the use of foster care for children on the move in Gambia. All of



the webinars can be found [here](#).

- **Report on community volunteers supporting family-based care in Rwanda.** The 'Inshuti z'Umuryango' (IZU) or 'Friends of the Family' programme (IZU) are a cadre of para-professional volunteers who are selected by residents in every village. The IZU have played a vital role in care reform in Rwanda. This [brief](#) outlines the background to, rationale for, and objectives of the IZU programme, the phased operationalisation of the cadre, key results achieved so far and challenges and lessons learned.

**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](mailto:blutome@childfrontiers.com)

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