



Better Care Network (BCN)
A Project of Tides Center

Job Title: East and Southern Africa (ESA) Regional Coordinator

Reports to: Director

Terms of Employment: Full Time

Deadline for submissions: 8th January 2018 (COB New York EST)

Position summary

The Better Care Network (BCN) is recognized as the preeminent information hub and global convener to influence action for children without adequate family care. BCN is an interagency initiative that facilitates global information exchange and collaboration among the growing number of organizations, governments, community groups, and individuals working to strengthen children's care. BCN advocates for technically sound policy and programmatic action on global, regional, and national levels. The BCN website (bettercarenetwork.org) is the largest online collection of key research, tools, events and other documentation on issues related to strengthening family care and alternative care, designed to support academics, policymakers and practitioners alike.

One of BCN's key roles is facilitating cross country learning and sharing, bringing local practices to the regional and global levels, as well as enabling actors working at the country level to access information and tools available from other regions and contexts. In sub-Saharan Africa, BCN has facilitated regional collaboration to strengthen care reform processes in Eastern and Southern Africa through its [Regional Initiative \(ESAR Initiative\)](#) started in 2013, with support from the Oak Foundation.

Building on its previous work and recommendations from stakeholders, the ESAR Initiative will focus this next phase on facilitating access by practitioners to quality evidence and learning working with partners in the region. The ESA Regional Coordinator ("Regional Coordinator") will lead the strategic planning and implementation process of this 5-year program phase. While the scope of the initiative is multi-country, the initiative will prioritize working directly with 2-3 countries in the region, to support a common national learning agenda and strategy on children's care.

The objective of this position is to support practitioners in target countries and, where possible, more broadly in the region to document, share and access to learning about children's care and care reforms, and how learning can become practice. There is a focus on working with stakeholders to develop more effective ways of capturing and sharing practitioner experiences and learning, as well as accessing other evidence and learning from regional and global sources. The Regional Coordinator will devise innovative learning and sharing strategies which will result in a measurable strengthening of capacity of practitioners in relation to this objective.

The Regional Coordinator is an individual who can consult and collaborate with a broad range of local, national and regional stakeholders and groups to develop sustainable and innovative learning and sharing strategies which build child care practitioners' capacities.

They will be comfortable leading the strategic development and implementation process. This will include using innovative approaches and media such as digital media/platforms, as well as face to face in-country activities.

Salary: A salary commensurate with experience will be offered and will include a good package of benefits.

Essential duties and responsibilities

- Undertaking regular surveys and consultations with stakeholders in order to understand country contexts, practitioner learning preferences, information which they could share, and feedback on the platform and activities.
- Developing and implementing innovative strategies which help child care practitioners to capture as well as easily access and share national, regional and global learning. As well as face to face events, this could include multi-media approaches such as digital storytelling, short films, round tables of discussion, social media, accessible report backs and communications on key events and resources, cross-country sharing and other approaches.
- Growing and developing the online regional community of practice - Care to Practice (C2P) - so that it can serve as a platform for easily accessible information, learning and sharing around child care in the Eastern and Southern Africa region.
- Facilitating the development and testing of national-level information exchange platforms on children's care in at least two priority countries. This will entail working with country level partners, including national working groups or coordinating bodies leading care reform, to establish sustainable, shared, accessible information platforms and knowledge management strategies.
- Work with partners in the region on key advocacy initiatives to support the implementation of the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care for Children (2009) and reforms of care systems emphasizing strengthening family based care and the improvement of alternative care services.

Education

Required:

- Master's degree in social work, social science, social policy or related field or a Bachelor's degree with proven, substantial training, knowledge, skills and experience obtained through other routes.

Skills, knowledge, experience and abilities

Required:

- A minimum of 7 years of relevant experience in the provision of services, policy development, capacity building or advocacy in relation to the children's sector;
- Significant experience working at national and/or ESA regional level;
- Comprehensive knowledge of the children's sector in the region. This might include family strengthening and children's alternative care, child protection, Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), children affected by HIV, or education programming;
- Proven experience developing strategies to build and share evidence and support learning around children, including using different and/or innovative approaches, and working with different target groups;
- Significant project and/or practical experience supporting learning and capacity building, including remote and online and learning;

- A “self-starter”, able to work independently, with proven leadership skills;
- Excellent writing and verbal skills in English. Able to write for different audiences and comfortable with public presenting and speaking;
- Proven experience working with a range of stakeholders, including child care practitioners, faith-based and community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, national governments, regional and national networks, interagency groups and working groups.
- Cross-cultural experience, understanding and sensitivity;
- Excellent interpersonal and oral communication skills;
- Proven ability to handle a challenging work load;
- Ability to travel extensively within the region and elsewhere (30%).
- Flexibility to work some evenings, for instance when speaking with BCN’s New York Head Office, and some weekends as necessary to fulfill the duties of this position.

Desired:

- Additional regional language(s) would be an asset.
- Experience working with a range of communication tools, including digital media.

Other qualifications and conditions

- Preference will be given to candidates who are nationals of an East or Southern African country.
- The post of Regional Coordinator is not an international post therefore candidates who already reside within the region are encouraged to apply.

Work environment and location

The post will be based within the East and Southern Africa region. The Regional Coordinator can be home-based and work remotely but will need excellent access to computer and web based communications. or can be located at the offices of a local partner. This position will require flexibility of schedule to operate across time zones and periodic travel, including, at times, long distance and to multiple locations. This may result in jetlag at times and the ability to work on occasions with limited sleep.

The Regional Coordinator will work directly with BCN’s New York-based Director and the Knowledge and Communications Specialist.

Travel requirements

It is expected that the Regional Coordinator will need to travel frequently (30%) within the region, and occasionally long distance.

To apply

- Curriculum Vitae
- Cover letter
- Names and contact details of two professional referees
- Links to, or samples of, 3 examples of relevant work

Send as a **single document** (samples may be attached separately)

To: Florence Martin, BCN Director, **Email:** florence.martin@bettercarenetwork.org,

By: 8th January 2018 by close of business New York (EST)

About BCN

BCN is a dynamic, interdisciplinary global network of organizations and individuals, which generates momentum for systemic change from the global to the local level by emphasizing the resilience and role of families and communities, and supporting sound alternative care.

BCN's mission is to facilitate active information exchange and collaboration on the issue of children without adequate family care and to advocate for technically sound policy and programmatic action at global, regional, and national levels in order to:

- Reduce instances of separation and abandonment of children;
- Reunite children outside family care with their families, wherever possible and appropriate;
- Increase, strengthen and support family and community-based care options for children who cannot be cared for by their parents;
- Establish international and national standards for all forms of care for children without adequate family care and mechanisms for ensuring compliance; and
- Ensure that residential institutions are used in a very limited manner and only when appropriate.

Its work is organized under three Strategic Pillars that describe the role it seeks to play by supporting child care actors through:

1. information exchange;
2. standard setting and technical support and guidance;
3. and leadership, brokerage and convening.

About the ESAR Initiative

The [ESAR Initiative](#) seeks to work within BCNs three strategic pillars with a focus on promoting effective evidence building, dissemination, sharing and learning by and for practitioners on alternative care in the East and Southern Africa Region.

Responding to the recommendations of partners and stakeholders at the regional and national consultations, BCN's East and Southern Africa Regional Initiative will focus this next phase on facilitating easier access by practitioners to quality evidence and learning on children's care and reform of care and protection systems. This includes not just "top down" learning but also promoting more "horizontal" and "bottom-up" learning. BCN recognizes that practitioners are often the holders of large repositories of experience, learning and evidence but this is not always well documented or shared with others.

It will make use of a range of approaches and methods to work with practitioners to capture new and innovative practices, as well as to enable them to share challenges and local solutions with each other. The aim will be to go beyond the more 'traditional' method of capturing and sharing learning through written reports or webinars, for instance digital story telling and other digital communications strategies. The longer-term goal will be to build capacity within countries for practitioners to develop better ways of capturing and sharing their and own experiences and learning.

The approach also takes into account the value of increased cross-country learning within the region. The regional initiative will consult with, survey and listen to practitioners and other regional actors so that they drive the content and focus of themes for documentation and discussion. This will help ensure that the information sharing platform and activities respond to the realities of practitioners' contexts in the region.

Envisaged key focus areas for the next 5 years:

- 1) Grow and develop Care to Practice (C2P) so that it can serve as a platform providing easily accessible of information, learning and sharing around child care in the East and Southern Africa region. It will enable practitioners to discuss challenges and learning more freely with each other and participate in cross country learning.
- 2) Help practitioners to easily access and share regional and other learning through different approaches.
- 3) Provide communications and report backs from key events for regional practitioners.
- 4) Undertake periodic surveys and consultations with national actors and C2P practitioners to understand country contexts, practitioner learning preferences, information which they could share, and feedback on the platform and activities.
- 5) Work with partners in the region on advocacy initiatives to support the implementation of the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care for Children (2009) and reforms of care systems emphasizing strengthening family based care and the improvement of alternative care services.
- 6) Facilitate the development and testing of national level information exchange platforms on children's care in at least 2 priority countries.
- 7) Support the testing of the inter-agency tracking tool developed by BCN and partners to enable national level actors to measure the implementation of the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care.