



Changing
THE WAY WE
care

Year Three

Annual Report Summary



MacArthur
Foundation



Maestral.

*Changing the Way We Care*SM (CTWWC) promotes safe, nurturing family care for children living in residential care institutions (often referred to as orphanages). The initiative works to reform national children’s care systems, prevent child-family separation by strengthening families, and shift donor and volunteer support away from residential care and toward family care. CTWWC’s three main strategic objectives include: (1) Governments promote family care; (2) Children stay in or return to safe and nurturing families; and (3) Key stakeholders make meaningful commitments toward family care.

Year Three saw important global momentum for keeping children in family care. CTWWC supported the creation of the “Transforming Children’s Care Global Collaborative Platform” with more than 450 members. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child held a Day of General Discussion on Children’s Rights and Alternative Care, bringing together more than 1,500 government representatives, children and young people, and civil society organizations from around the world. CTWWC contributed significantly to the planning and content of the event.

CTWWC continued to work for family care in Latin America and East and Southern Africa, and at the same time expanded communication efforts targeting U.S. faith audiences who support residential care facilities overseas. CTWWC also conducted a Year Three review process which produced important feedback from children and families, social workers, government staff, and community members to inform the initiative’s work going forward



CTWWC PROGRESS TOWARD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

Governments Promote Family Care

Although the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect work in Year Three, the initiative continued to make significant progress toward its objectives.

In Guatemala:

- CTWWC, along with several government agencies, became part of the National Foster Care Working Group and contributed significantly to the development of a 2021-2023 Strategic Plan for Foster Care in Guatemala. This plan will support the implementation of foster care nationally as an alternative to residential care.
- Close to 300 government representatives and staff of residential care facilities in Guatemala were trained in case management, successful reintegration, and care reform. CTWWC initiated a partnership with the Pan-American University to strengthen training for public and private sector children's care professionals.
- CTWWC has partnered with several municipal governments to expand support services to vulnerable families and children and has established a relationship with the National Association of Municipal Governments to expand this work.

In Kenya:

- Following the finalization and endorsement of the National Care Reform Strategy by senior government officials, CTWWC supported the National Council of Children's Services to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan for the strategy and has begun working with Area Advisory Councils to support care reform implementation at the local level.
- CTWWC and UNICEF supported the Department of Children's Services (DCS), the National Council of Children's Services, and Muslim leaders to develop a national framework for

the implementation of Kafala, a practice under Islamic law which provides alternative care to children who are unable to live with their biological families.

- CTWWC and the DCS held a three-day training for journalists in Kenya on family care and care reform to influence reporting on children's care issues and in this way, to inform public opinion.

In Moldova:

- CTWWC began work in Moldova this year, contributing to the government's National Program for Child Protection (NPCP) by conducting a comprehensive situational analysis of children's care in Moldova and providing key recommendations to the NPCP Action Plan.
- CTWWC conducted eight pieces of research on the care system and situation in Moldova and presented the preliminary results to representatives of 96 governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGO).



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CTWWC PROGRESS TOWARD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

Children stay in or return to safe and nurturing families

In Guatemala:

- In the municipality of Zacapa, CTWWC has been piloting a process for reunifying 25 children, all of whom have been in residential care for more than five years, with their families. Of the 25, six have been reunified and 11 are in the process of reunification. The Guatemalan judiciary has replicated CTWWC's approach in the Western Highlands of the country.
- CTWWC, in partnership with the attorney general's office, launched a pilot program for preventing family separation in Guatemala City. A total of 66 children from 18 families were referred and prevented from entering residential care through family strengthening services and regular home monitoring visits.
- CTWWC Guatemala signed a Memorandum of Understanding with New Horizons, a residential care facility, for CTWWC to provide technical assistance to reunify the children in New Horizons' care and begin transitioning services away from residential care to family-based care.

In Kenya

- CTWWC held two-day workshops on the use of case management to ensure safe and sustainable reintegration of children in residential care with their families. The training was provided to caseworkers and case managers from residential care facilities in Kilifi, Kisumu, and Nyamira counties.
- CTWWC held three-day trainings on disability inclusion in four counties in partnership with government ministries and organizations of persons with disabilities. The training was designed to help frontline workers more

effectively promote family care over residential care for children with disabilities and to strengthen service referral networks.

- CTWWC and its local partners held case plan reviews and mentorship sessions to identify families at risk of separation. A total of 349 families, including 50 families who had recently been reunified, were identified and received economic support payments as well as referrals for other government support services.

In Moldova

- In partnership with the government of Moldova, CTWWC conducted assessments for 200 children in six residential care facilities with the aim of family reunification or placement in alternative family care. CTWWC also adapted existing assessment tools to be used remotely during the pandemic.

In Haiti and India

- CTWWC supported the reintegration of children from the Alta Visita residential care facility in Haiti and the transition of this institution to a daycare facility for children with disabilities.
- In India, CTWWC worked with local government authorities to monitor and support children who had been rapidly reunified with their families from residential care facilities because of COVID-19. The initiative also trained social service workers on new approaches to children's care and conducted awareness-raising activities for close to 4,000 community leaders and members.

CTWWC PROGRESS TOWARD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

Global Commitments Shifting to family care

Year Three saw several significant achievements toward the global shift to family care, including an unprecedented global consultation on Children’s Rights and Alternative Care through the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child’s Day of General Discussion with participation from over 1,500 individuals, including governments, children and young people, and civil society from 127 countries. CTWWC played a lead role in the communications for the event, contributed written submissions, and supported the participation of children, young people, and adults with lived experience of care. Global exchange, collaboration, and advocacy for family-based care were also strengthened in 2021 with the establishment of the Transforming Children’s Care Global Collaborative Platform (GCP), supported by CTWWC, with more than 450 members.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, CTWWC and UNICEF co-sponsored a Regional Learning Platform to foster learning and knowledge sharing among government officials and social work practitioners on children’s care reform. CTWWC also published a comprehensive desk review on promising practices in care reform in Latin America and is supporting a mapping of care leaver¹ associations in Latin America, in an effort to better engage and support these organizations.

During 2021, CTWWC continued to provide technical support and mentoring to organizations transitioning from residential care to family-based care. Communications work to sensitize U.S. faith communities about the importance of supporting family care and to disseminate

the research, learning, and resource materials developed by CTWWC to governments and organizations working to reform children’s care also grew significantly. CTWWC supported research to better understand U.S. Catholic and Christian support for overseas residential care and to test the most effective messages for sensitizing these audiences. CTWWC joined a collaborative communications campaign organized by the Faith to Action Network to raise awareness among Christians in the U.S. about the importance of supporting family care, rather than residential care, through their charitable giving and volunteering.

In 2021, we conducted a review of our first three years, which included a survey of 59 households in Kenya and Guatemala. We received invaluable feedback from children and families which has helped us strengthen our approaches going forward. Here is sample of some of the key findings:



- A continued focus on family strengthening is critical, as it provides protective factors which lead to greater child well-being.
- More support is needed for caregivers and children with disabilities who face stigma and who are more vulnerable and isolated.
- Our family support services should be tailored to meet the unique needs of older caregivers and those who are single or widowed.
- In Guatemala, children who had been reintegrated with their families overwhelmingly rated their lives as better than when they were in residential care facilities. In Kenya, however, children did not rate their lives as very different after being reintegrated.

¹ A care leaver is an adult who has spent time in foster or residential care and left at the age of 18.

By the numbers

Highlights from CTWWC's first three years of implementation include:



554 
government

personnel participated in awareness-raising events on care reform in Guatemala, Kenya, and Moldova

20
studies

to better understand the status of the childcare systems in the demonstration countries and regions were completed or contributed to, including *Country-Level Lessons in Care Reform Coordination and System Strengthening from Guatemala and Kenya; A Study on Child Care Reform in Latin America and the Caribbean Aimed at Developing a Regional Advocacy Strategy; Moldova Social Services Assessment Report; Kenya Care System Assessment; Guatemala Opinion Study; Kenya Situational Analysis of Residential Care in Four Counties; Care Reform Legal Review in Moldova; Systems For Child Care Reform in Moldova and Opportunities to Do Business Differently Through Collective Impact; Guatemala Census of Residential Care Providers; Guatemala Public Expenditure Analysis; Kenya Funding Streams Analysis; Country Care Snapshots for Cambodia, Costa Rica, Ghana, Liberia, Moldova, Nepal, Thailand, Uganda, and Ukraine.*



779 
social service

workers were trained on care reform in Kenya and Guatemala

1,771 
children

at risk of separation or placed into family care received individualized support through case management

800 
households

benefited from emergency economic support funds or received training on kitchen gardens and small business management skills in Kenya and Guatemala

10 
placements

of children into residential care were prevented through case management efforts and family strengthening support in Guatemala



356, 674
community members



received sensitization messages on the harm of residential care and the need for family strengthening in Kenya and Guatemala

4,655
subscribers



to CTWWC partner Better Care Network were reached by 12 comprehensive newsletters



137
CTWWC



learning briefs/reports were published with 8,722 downloads

14
faith-based



organizations were mentored/trained in childcare reform processes and tools

110
regional or global events



on care reform were hosted by or participated in by CTWWC teams



**DAY OF GENERAL DISCUSSION (DGD)
"CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND ALTERNATIVE CARE"**

16-17 SEPTEMBER 2021
#DGD2021 #CHILDRIGHTSANDCARE

"In order to protect children's rights, I believe that the UNCRC, governments, and other key stakeholders listening to me today have the power to make a huge difference by funding training for social workers, youth-led networks, or agencies that support care leavers such as the Kenya Society of Care Leavers, in order to give care leavers rights to a life of meaning, a sense of connection, and stopping the cycle of abuse, poverty, and re-entry into the institutions."

"Rahab," a care leaver who was an invited speaker at the Day of General Discussion on "Children's Rights and Alternative Care" in September 2021.



Andrea is a mother of five. Her children were placed in a residential care facility by the courts in Guatemala due to precarious living conditions at home. CTWWC supported the family from the moment the case was identified and helped to reunify the children with the family. As part of the case management process, Andrea worked with the CTWWC team to develop a care plan, which included how to improve her family's economic situation. Andrea is unable to read or write, but she identified one of her strengths as cooking. CTWWC helped her learn how manage her finances, obtain seed money from a government program, and ultimately start a small food business.

“At the beginning,” she said, “I didn’t think my ‘empanadas’ (turnovers) would sell, but then I realized people liked them. I started making empanadas more often and I realized that I could support my children.”



Andrea has now found more than income; she has discovered her strengths, self-worth, and confidence in caring for her children.



**Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the family*

