

Changing the Way We Care in Kenya

Changing
THE WAY WE
care

Our Work

Changing The Way We Care (CTWWC) is an initiative designed to promote safe, nurturing family care for children, including those reuniting from residential care facilities (sometimes referred to as “orphanages”) and those risk of child-family separation. CTWWC strengthens families and reforms national systems of care for children, while focusing on family reintegration and development of alternative family-based care (such as kinship or foster care). CTWWC Kenya is demonstrating change in Kisumu,

Nyamira, Kilifi and Siaya Counties while working with the Government of Kenya to reform the system of care for children.

Why Families and Not Residential Care?

Up to 80-90 % of children in residential care facilities (commonly called “orphanages” and known as charitable children’s institutions or CCIs in Kenya) have a living parent who would raise them at home if they had the services and support they needed. Increasing research shows that children’s physical,



Karen Kasmauski for CRS



cognitive, emotional, and social development are positively influenced by growing up in a supportive family environment, while CCI's have been shown to negatively impact all areas of a child's development: cognitive, physical, emotional, life skills and social development.¹ Not to mention, CCI's are significantly more expensive to uphold than care in a family and in the community. Decades of evidence tells us what we know to be true in our hearts - that no institution can replace the support of a healthy, nurturing family.

The research demonstrates that there are not bad and good orphanages. Children grow up best in families, families of origin, foster families, extended families, and other arrangements. But families, not institutions.

- as quoted in, "How volunteering abroad in orphanages is harmful to children," a video by Kindea Labs

TOGETHER, WE CAN CHANGE THE WAY WE CARE IN KENYA

1. We can empower families

Change will come by empowering Kenyan families and communities to care for children. CTWWC helps by engaging those who have lived experience - such as children who have been in care, parents, communities, those who run residential care facilities, and local actors - by raising awareness and support for strong families and the services they need and by addressing community stigma that can lead children and families to separate. CTWWC Kenya supports CCI's to reunify children with families and strengthens families through case management, links to social services, parenting sessions, economic strengthening, and monitoring to ensure children remain in families.

In Fiscal Year 2023, CTWWC Kenya



PLACED 389 children in family care or in their communities with follow-up support and monitoring.



ENROLLED 3,314 caregivers to receive economic support.



ENROLLED 379 caregivers in positive parenting sessions for family strengthening.



ENGAGED 6,309 participants in community-level awareness raising activities.

2. We can influence systemic change

Change happens when governments strengthen policy, workforce, support systems and services. The Government of Kenya, with the support of CTWWC and many other partners, has taken bold steps to promote strong families for children and to coordinate care reform. CTWWC works closely with the National Council for Children's Services (NCCS), the Directorate of Children's Services

¹ <https://wcd.nic.in/node/2190742>

(DCS), Directorate of Social Development (DSD), and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCWPD). CTWWC and many others have supported the Government of Kenya to draft policies, guidelines, tools, training materials and standards of practice. One of the most significant examples being the National Care Reform Strategy 2022-2032, which provides a framework to guide implementation of care reform in Kenya over the next 10 years.

3. We can educate & gather support

Donors and supporters of CCI genuinely care about children in need. By redirecting donors and other supporters towards families instead of residential care, we can support family care for all Kenyan children. CTWWC Kenya also raises awareness of those who care for children on the benefits of family care through social platforms, local, regional and global learning events, and published work. Tremendous progress has been made since the initiative was launched in 2018. In 2024 and beyond, CTWWC is moving into a new way of building on the work done in the demonstration counties by promoting in-country learning and expanding to the Eastern and Southern region of Africa, as well as building strategic partnerships that promote scaling of our models through collaboration and replication.



ONYANGO'S STORY

Onyango* cares for his seven grandsons. When their parents were not able to provide for them, they made the difficult decision to leave them in Onyango's care. Without any support, this was difficult for Onyango. He heard of a CCI nearby, and sent two of the children to live there, but he and their brothers missed them very much. CTWWC began working with the CCI and met Onyango. The social workers visited him, and shared how he could be supported to care for all the boys. Onyango attributes their help to bringing his grandsons back from the CCI.

"It's been two years since [the two children] came back home. Their school performance has remarkably improved, and there has been improvement in the health of my grandson with disability... I can now see how they are better off at home more than in the CCI."

Now, all the boys are thriving at home together. They go to school and tell us how happy they are to be with their grandfather. Onyango says: "they now feel like a family with a place to call home."

** Name has been changed to protect identity*



Need to know more?

Contact Changing the Way We Care at info@ctwwc.org or visit changingthewaywecare.org.

Changing The Way We Care (CTWWC) is implemented by Catholic Relief Services and Maestral International, along with other global, national and local partners working together to change the way we care for children around the world. Our principal global partners are the Better Care Network and Faith to Action. CTWWC is funded in part by a Global Development Alliance of USAID and the GHR Foundation.

This product is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Changing the Way We Care and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

©2024 Catholic Relief Services. All Rights Reserved. This material may not be reproduced, displayed, modified or distributed without the express prior written permission of copyright holder. For permission, write to info@ctwwc.org. The photographs in this publication are used for illustrative purposes only; they do not imply any particular health, orphanhood or residential care status on the part of any person who appears in the photographs.