



CHIONISO MANGANDO

Case Care Worker, Zimbabwe



“When I meet children who are not afraid to speak up for their rights, I am filled with a sense of accomplishment and pride.”



Overview

Five years ago, community leaders in Chioniso’s village were looking for volunteers to help connect vulnerable families to social and health services. Because she was known in the community as someone with a passion for helping children, Chioniso was selected and trained by the Department of Social Services to become a case care worker in Epworth, Ward 7. Her city is known for its extreme poverty. Many people live in informal settlements, and this environment creates a high number of vulnerable children and families. Chioniso knew that being a case care worker would, therefore, be quite a challenge in her district. Chioniso embraced the challenge and chose to fulfil the case care worker role out of her love of children and her community.

Typical tasks and responsibilities

Case care workers work to ensure that children are protected and are provided with opportunities for a better future. Without case care workers, many children in the community would have no place to turn. Children are the leaders and parents of tomorrow, so they need to have their rights safeguarded and live in a community that is free from violence.

One of the most important aspects of a case care worker’s job is learning to prioritize the often multiple needs of the child. For example, if a child is out of school and sick, it is vital that a case care worker like Chioniso attend first to her/his illness. Chioniso might help a child get tested through the World Education and Bantwana initiative’s Integrated Management of Pediatric HIV and AIDS Care and Treatment (IMPACT) program, which identifies HIV-positive children and connects them to antiretroviral therapy as well as family counseling and support services. After the child’s medical needs are met, Chioniso might connect the child to the Community Learning Centres and Safe Parks (CLASP) program to get the child enrolled in an accelerated learning program that will work toward reintegration back into the formal school system.

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Training and skills

The Department of Social Services provided Chioniso with training in case management, counseling, and first aid. The Department also equipped her with the necessary tools to connect children to the services they need, including assessment forms, bags, hats, and bicycles.

Why she loves her job

In these past few years, Chioniso has seen her district gradually change. The people in Chioniso's community know her and understand her role as a case care worker, so they feel comfortable coming to her for help and to report cases of child abuse. More importantly, children are now coming to report their own abuse because they feel that Chioniso is a safe per-

son for them to confide in. When Chioniso meets children who are not afraid to speak up for their rights, she is filled with a sense of accomplishment and pride. All the successes so far have made her believe in the power and value of every case care worker.

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance would like to thank WEI/Bantwana, Zimbabwe Department of Social Services, Unicef and USAID for contributing this profile to the "I am a Social Service Worker" series.

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Who is the social service workforce?

While capturing any one definition of the social service workforce is challenging, it can be broadly defined to describe a variety of workers – paid and unpaid, governmental and nongovernmental – who staff the social service system and contribute to the care of vulnerable populations. The social service system is comprised of a set of interventions, programs and benefits that are provided by governmental, civil society and community actors to ensure the welfare and protection of socially or economically disadvantaged individuals and families.

What is Social Service Workforce Week?

During this week, advocates will bring attention to and build support for the social service workforce as well as raise awareness about promising workforce strengthening efforts supported by stakeholders around the world. Organized around daily themes focused on areas of practice, the week will allow Alliance members and the public to engage in a dynamic platform of information exchange and advocacy through various forms of social media.

What is WEI/Bantwana?

Launched in 2006, World Education Inc./Bantwana Initiative helps local communities in sub-Saharan Africa support orphaned and vulnerable children and their

caregivers. In Zimbabwe, and in collaboration with USAID and UNICEF, WEI/Bantwana supports the Department of Social Service in Zimbabwe to identify hard to reach, vulnerable children and provide them with critical interventions and community-based child protection services. One such service is to help the Department of Social Service seek out caring, highly-regarded community members and train them to become qualified case care workers and link them to the national social work system. Training and supervision is provided by the Department of Social Service in areas including case management, counselling, and referrals. Once trained, case care workers identify vulnerable children and families within their own communities and connect them to the services they need. They are also equipped with bicycles, bags, assessment forms, and other tools to complete their work effectively. Bantwana is an initiative of World Education, Inc., a nonprofit organization founded more than 60 years ago, in 1951, dedicated to improving the lives of the poor through education, and economic and social development programs.

Learn More:

Learn more about Chioniso and other social service workers! Join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtag #SSWWeek and online at www.socialserviceworkforce.org/SSWWeek.

"Improving the workforce. Improving lives."