



LUNGI MKHIZE

Child and Youth Care Worker, South Africa



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Overview

Lungi Mkhize is proud to be a supervisor of child and youth care worker mentors. Child and youth care workers provide developmental and therapeutic care to vulnerable and at-risk children and youth. When speaking of her work as a mentor supervisor, Lungi not only focuses on the support she gives the mentors under her wing but time and again relates this back to the true focus of these workers' collective efforts—the child and her/his development.

Typical tasks and responsibilities

Lungi started her professional journey as a child and youth care worker herself, working for five years at the first ISIBINDI program in Umbumbulu. Designed by South Africa's National Association of Child Care Workers, the ISIBINDI model “responds holistically to the needs of children, youth and families who are vulnerable and at-risk.” The program screens unemployed community members and selects, trains, and deploys them as child and youth care workers serving families in their own communities. Working under the mentorship of experienced social service professionals, the child and youth care workers blend practical household support tasks with care and development opportunities. Each project using the ISIBINDI model is part of a wider network of community-based programs.

Lungi next worked as an ISIBINDI mentor for five years, her first supervisory position. As a mentor, she supported and literally mentored child and youth care worker teams at different ISIBINDI projects. The position included providing online in situ real-time supervision as well as monitoring child and youth care workers' performance and modeling good child and youth care practice.

At present, Lungi has gone one step further and now supervises ISIBINDI mentors through ongoing one-on-one and group supervision. She assists mentors in their personal and professional development, helping them hone their skills related to planning, report writing, providing accurate feedback on children and families, supervising child and youth care workers, and presenting information. She is proud to be the first “port of call” when her mentors come across difficult situations, and she provides intensive case consultation. Lungi is also honored to present the ISIBINDI model at stakeholder meetings—meetings that strengthen the vital links between the National Association of Child Care Workers, communities, and implementing partners.

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Training and skills

Lungi views training—lots of training—as one of the keys to her success in the mentor supervisor position. She has completed the Further Education and Training Certificate in child and youth care work, is a qualified and accredited trainer and assessor, and has completed the New Managers Development Programme offered by the Business School of Stellenbosch University. She also received training in consultative supervision through the National Association of Child Care Workers. These and other training opportunities have helped Lungi refresh the mind, maintain a sharp focus, and deepen her practice skills.

Why she loves her job

Lungi says she has seen many improvements in her team of mentors since she started in her current position as their supervisor. Most gratifying to her has been the way that her mentors have passed along the skills she has taught them as they themselves mentor up-and-coming child and youth care workers. In Lungi's view, it is not only technical and professional skills that have been transferred but also something less "professional" but nonetheless essential, and that is passion.

Sitting down to discuss the work done in her community causes Lungi to reflect on her central inspiration—the child and her/his development. She is happy that she can advocate for children and youth and be of service in 18 different communities. Lungi is also proud that her professional skills have an impact on over 400 orphaned, vulnerable, and at-risk children and youth and their family members. When asked what message she has for new child and youth care workers, she says with conviction that "one must always remember, if you help a child develop, you help our nation develop."

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance would like to thank NACCW for contributing this profile to the "I am a Social Service Worker" series.



**"Improving the workforce.
Improving lives."**

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 ISIBINDI?

Designed by South Africa's National Association of Child Care Workers, the ISIBINDI model "responds holistically to the needs of children, youth and families who are vulnerable and at-risk." The program screens unemployed community members and selects, trains, and deploys them as child and youth care workers serving families in their own communities. Working under the mentorship of experienced social service professionals, the child and youth care workers blend practical household support tasks with care and development opportunities. Each project using the ISIBINDI model is part of a wider network of community-based programs.

Learn More

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