



Simon Peter Otieno Project Manager and Founding Member, Make Me Smile Kenya



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Overview

Simon Peter Otieno founded Make Me Smile Kenya in 2008 (then "Childrenhouse Miwani") after seeing the need of support for vulnerable children, particularly young girls, after a factory collapse eliminated the major source of income in Miwani, Kenya. The collapse happened when Simon was in secondary school, and many of the friends his age had to drop out when their families could no longer afford school fees. The girls in his community were disproportionately affected, with many being forced into early marriage.

Typical tasks and responsibilities

As a founding member and program manager, Simon has seen his tasks and responsibilities expand as Make Me Smile Kenya has grown. Make Me Smile Kenya now serves 3,200 community members, both boys and girls, with sustainable development through seven core services: education, economic strengthening, protection of rights, medical support, shelter & housing, psychosocial support, and food & nutrition. Make Me Smile Kenya also provides services to people living with HIV/AIDS, microfinance, family planning, and hygiene and health services.

With the support of USAID and Path Kenya, Simon oversees these programs, from three Make Me Smile Kenya free medical camps which provided services to 850 patients, to their shelter and housing project supported by the USAID project APHIAplus (AIDs population health integrated assistance, people driven leadership for universal sustainability), which helped with the renovation of 48 houses over the span of two years.

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Training and skills

Following secondary school, Simon earned his pharmacy diploma. After founding Make Me Smile Kenya, he went back to school and graduated last year with a bachelor's degree in development studies. He is now working on a master's degree in research and public policy. In addition, he has received training from APHIAplus on parenting skills, OVC-care and support, psychosocial support and leadership.

Why he loves his job

As program coordinator of Make Me Smile Kenya, Simon has witnessed the program's growth from 10 girls to more than 3,200 community members receiving services. Peter says this work of helping his community is very satisfying and fulfilling. "There is no joy equal to that of being able to work with the children and to do it well," he said.

Joining the Alliance

Simon became a member of the Alliance in July 2013 after participating in a live webcast on child and youth care work sponsored by the Alliance.



**“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 the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance?

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance works toward a world where a well-planned, well-trained and well-supported social service workforce effectively delivers promising practices that improve the lives of vulnerable populations. Launched in June 2013, the mission of the Alliance is to promote the knowledge and evidence, resources and tools and political will and action needed to address key social service workforce challenges, especially within low- to middle-income countries.

The Alliance is funded by PEPFAR/USAID and the GHR Foundation. IntraHealth International acts as host and fiscal sponsor of the Alliance.

Learn More

Learn more about **Simon** and other social service workers! Join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtag #SSWeek, on our Facebook page and at www.socialserviceworkforce.org/SSWeek.