

Commissions, tenders and consultancies

Policy Review: Lesotho and Swaziland

Since its establishment in 2001, the Children's Institute has focused the scope of its work on South Africa only. However, it has begun to extend activities to neighbouring countries in the recent past, starting with a study in 2008 for the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA) to examine law, policy, resource flows and care models in Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland.

This work was followed by another OSISA-commissioned study to elaborate on donor funding for orphans and vulnerable children in Lesotho and Swaziland, and on the laws, policies and programmes in these two countries related to the protection of children's rights as they relate to HIV and AIDS. The study was done in collaboration with the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE). It required desktop research and in-country visits to interview roleplayers in government, civil society and international agencies involved in children's issues. The study was completed in early 2010 and is due for publication by OSISA.

Care and Support for Teaching and Learning: SADC Policy Review and Development of Framework and Guidelines

The Children's Institute was contracted by MIET Africa, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to undertake a policy review and develop a regional policy framework and guidelines for mainstreaming care and support in the education sector. The main aim of the framework is to strengthen and harmonise national care and support policies and programmes in the education sector to improve education outcomes in SADC member states.

The objective of the review was to establish to what extent the existing policy and legal environments enable and support schools to ensure that all children are enrolled at school at an appropriate age; able to attend school regularly and complete their schooling; and provided the opportunity and support to enable them to reach their full potential.

As the well-being of many children in the SADC region is severely compromised by various factors, the region has seen a growing movement to strengthening the culture of caring in schools and build partnership with service providers, families and surrounding

neighbourhoods. This has resulted in the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) – a potentially comprehensive and responsive rights-based system that provides a co-ordinating mechanism for a wide range of interventions supporting child well-being and education outcomes.

The assignment involved a rapid desktop review of relevant policies in Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The rapid reviews for the DRC, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zambia were validated and enriched by three days of field work in each country.

An intersectoral delegation of policy experts from all member states met to validate the preliminary findings and strengthen member state policy reviews. Participants also explored how the policy reviews could inform a regional policy framework and guidelines, and made preliminary suggestions for the content and structure of the framework and guidelines.

All the reviews were being integrated with a review already undertaken in South Africa to form a comprehensive policy review of all SADC member states. This will provide a foundation for dialogue and action towards developing an effective and enabling framework for CSTL, which will be presented to member states for validation early in 2011.

Baseline Study: Child and Youth Care Centres

Residential care services in South Africa are one response, often considered the last resort, to children found to be in need of care and protection. Such children are considered to be in unsuitable or risky care arrangements and, if deemed in the child's best interest, a court may order that he or she is placed in a residential care setting when other more suitable alternatives are not feasible.

'Child and youth care centres' is a new term introduced by the Children's Act, encompassing a range of different types of residential care settings for children. The Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) contracted the services of the Children's Institute to assist with a baseline study of all registered child and youth care centres in the country in early 2010.

The study's scope included children's homes, places of safety, and shelters. It set a baseline of these residential care settings at the commencement of the Children's Act of 2005, as amended. The study provided a profile of all registered centres, the staff complement, and of children resident in the centres at the time of the study.

This research was commissioned by UNICEF South Africa in partnership with the national Department of Social Development.