

Changing the face of care for vulnerable children

REPPSI reviews their *Certificate Course in Community-Based Work with Children and Youth*. It responds to a critical regional demand for quality training in child care, and specifically social and emotional (psychosocial) support, child protection and promotion of children's rights. The Certificate is a standardised, accredited course for East and Southern Africa.

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By: Lynette Mudekanye (REPSSI, Deputy Executive Director)

A new cadre of carers

As 2012 dawns and we make plans for the coming year, 1000 students in ten countries across Africa are preparing for their graduation.

For some, this is their first formal qualification. For many more, especially in rural areas, they could have only gained this qualification because it was offered through distance-learning.

And for all of these students, the *Certificate Course in Community-Based Work with Children and Youth* has changed how they do their work, and specifically how they interact with vulnerable children.

The Certificate is a standardised, accredited course for East and Southern Africa. It responds to a critical regional demand for quality training in child care, and specifically social and emotional (psychosocial) support, child protection and promotion of children's rights.

It is designed for people working with children and youth. Students meet in small groups with a trained mentor every 3 weeks, and their written assignments are sent to be marked by an academic institution, for each of the 6 modules that comprise the course. Current students are community caregivers, field officers, social workers, teachers, police, and community workers who work with children through over 400 organisations and government in ten countries.

Testimonies of Change

In Kenya, a volunteer children's officer, Wilberforce Okeba, now understands the specific vulnerabilities girls face in their daily lives. "So I set up a group advocating for the rights of the girl child," he explains proudly.



In Tanzania, the Certificate has prompted Winfrida Mwashala to transform her institutional orphanage for 30 children into a community care programme reaching more than 9000 vulnerable boys and girls.



In Malawi, teacher Judith Karaonge says that instead of punishing students for coming late to class, she now spends time finding out what problems they are facing at home which may be affecting school performance. “Now I’m able to call them, to counsel them, to assist them,” she tells us.



Reserve a place on the course!

For the next enrolment in July 2012, we would like to ensure that thousands more can access the Certificate Course, so that more people working with vulnerable children and youth in the region can acquire these much-needed skills and knowledge.

The cost of the Certificate Course is \$1500 per student, which includes all books, mentor sessions, and orientation to at least three REPSSI tools – Journey of Life, Tree of Life and Kids’ Clubs. It is offered in Botswana, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Lesotho, Kenya and Mozambique.

We invite you to provide sponsorship for applicants from your organization or your partners to enrol in the Certificate,. This will build your organisation’s capacity to provide improved, professionalised services to children.

For more information about the Certificate Course, and how you can support students to enroll, contact:

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