

## Factors related to retention intentions among Child and Youth Care Workers in South Africa: Results from a national survey

Child and youth care workers (CYCWs) are a crucial and growing component of South Africa's national response to HIV and AIDS and other problems affecting children and families. CYCWs use the community-centred Isibindi model of care to reach the most vulnerable with key services including psychosocial, health, economic and education support. Understanding how to support retention in the CYCW workforce is vital to programme quality and sustainability. The present analysis uses data from the first nationally representative survey of CYCWs in South Africa to identify factors related to workers' intentions to remain in their positions for at least the next 12 months.

### Study design

- Data were collected in 2015 as part of a formative evaluation conducted around the mid-point of a nation-wide Isibindi CYCW programme expansion.
- A nationally representative sample was drawn from a comprehensive list of project sites with CYCW population sizes provided by the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW).
- Participants completed an anonymous questionnaire in English addressing demographics, work history, retention intentions, training, mentorship and supervision experiences, workload and remuneration.
- A total of 1,158 CYCWs from 78 programme sites took part, reflecting an 87% response rate.

### Findings

- About half of the CYCWs in this study indicated that they intended to continue working in their current position for at least the next 12 months.
- High quality mentorship and frequent supervision were positively associated with retention intentions among CYCWs.
- Those who indicated that wanting to help children or the community was their primary reason for becoming a CYCW were more likely than those who cited other reasons to intend to stay.
- Workloads perceived as too high and the experience of feeling threatened or unsafe on the job were negatively associated with intentions to remain a CYCW.
- As CYCWs gained experience they were also less likely to report intending to stay in their positions.

### Policy and programme recommendations

- Findings highlight the importance of mentorship and supervision in the Isibindi CYCW model and underscore the salience of efforts to ensure fidelity to these components at scale.
- Accentuated efforts to raise CYCWs' awareness of the social value of their work could serve as additional motivation for sustained employment.
- Enhanced support for manageable workloads, workplace safety, and career advancement may help promote retention among CYCWs.

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