



SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VALUING A RESILIENT PROFESSION: INTERNATIONAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKERS' WEEK: 3 TO 6 MAY 2022

International Child and Youth Care Workers' Week is celebrated globally during the first week of May. This year it is celebrated from today the 3rd to 6th May 2022 under the theme "Valuing a Resilient Profession". This theme reflects the complexity of the situation faced by child and youth care workers in South Africa. While there is optimism in the development and growth of the profession, the forward impetus of the profession is impeded by a variety of issues. However, the theme relates to the strength of the profession as a whole and to the extraordinary resilience displayed by so many South African child and youth care workers in their services to our country's vulnerable families.

Child and youth care workers are direct frontline essential social service workers who provide care, and protection and facilitate developmental and therapeutic interventions in the life space of the child and family. They promote the optimal development of children, youth and their families found in a variety of settings including residential care, community, court, and school environments. Child and youth care workers at a professional and auxiliary level are required by law to register with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) in order to be licenced to practise their profession.

As of 31 March 2022, 200 child and youth care worker in the professional category of registration, 8,358 child and youth care workers in the auxiliary category of registration and 4055 students in child and youth care work are registered with the SACSSP.

International Child and Youth Care Workers' Week is celebrated in 2022 at a time where the world is dealing with the impact of COVID-19 on society as a whole. In South Africa, we are celebrating against the backdrop of the recent widespread flooding and mudslides that resulted in loss of lives and displacement of families in the KwaZulu-Natal, and displacement of families in Langa, Western cape after fires that gutted close to 200 households. Several families lost their belongings and are unable to access basic necessities such as food and shelter and must rebuild their lives whilst coping with the trauma of their near-death experiences. In KwaZulu- Natal school buildings are damaged by floods and many schools are without water and electricity. Child and youth care workers who are in the Isibindi Ezikoleni Program are working tirelessly to identify and support vulnerable learners across 55 schools and 5 districts in the KZN province. The team received support from the National Association of Child Care Workers, the Department of Health, the Department of Social Development, local municipalities and community-based organisation, providing services aligned to the District Development Model (DDM).

- 170 learners received poverty alleviation services such as food parcels, school uniform and stationary.
- 568 learners were assisted to access SASSA disaster financial support.
- 156 learners were referred for medical attention.
- 2 176 learners received counselling for trauma and emotional distress.

During *International Child and Youth Care Workers' Week* the SACSSP joins many organisations, employers, service users and, most significantly, child and youth care workers in the country and across the globe to recognise and celebrate the significance of the profession in social service delivery. In South Africa, child and youth care workers employed by provincial Departments of Social Development mostly work in child and youth care centres which include secure care and places of safety programmes as outlined in section 191 (2) of the Children's Act. Child and youth care workers employed in the non-government organisation (NGO) sector work in what used to be called 'children's homes' and in community-based programmes – including the Isibindi projects and the new Risiha projects. They are also deployed in schools in the Isibindi Ezikoleni model.

The South African Council for Social Service Professions would like to recognise the resilience of all registered child and youth care workers as part of their professional practice, while also wishing them an *International Child and Youth Care Workers' Week* filled with pride especially during these challenging times in our country and the world over.

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ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SERVICE PROFESSIONS

The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP/ Council) is a statutory body established in terms of section 2 of the Social Service Professions Act No. 110 of 1978 (the Act). Council has two professional boards under its auspices: the Professional Board for Social Work and the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work. Council, in conjunction with its two professional boards, guides and regulates the professions of social work and child youth care work in aspects pertaining to registration; education and training; professional conduct and ethical behaviour; ensuring continuing professional development; and fostering compliance with professional standards. It protects the integrity of the social service professions as well as the interest of the public at large. In order to safeguard the public and indirectly the professions, registration with Council in terms of the Act is a prerequisite before practising social work and child and youth care work. Registration is mandatory for social workers, social auxiliary workers, student social workers, student social auxiliary workers, child and youth care workers, auxiliary child and youth care workers, student child and youth care workers, and student auxiliary child and youth care workers.