

Strengthening the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection

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"Investing in the social service workforce will yield high returns for child protection"

Outline

- ▶ Who constitutes this workforce?
- What are their roles?
- ▶ Why invest in strengthening the SSW?



Professionals And Para-professionals



Governmental And Nongovernmental Workforce



Paid And Unpaid Workers

- Direct service practitioners
- Programme directors & managers
- Case managers & Case workers
- Researchers
- Educators
- Advocates & lobbyists
- Policy Makers
- **•** ...

https://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/

A variety of professional and para-professional workers serving the social service system

Different actors with different roles, functions, competencies and skills

SSW Roles in Child Protection

Macro level:

Promotive services

Mezzo -communities

Preventative services

Micro- Families & children

- Preventative services:
- Response services

- Policy development
- Research, education and training
- Advocacy representation-voice
- Resource mobilisation
- Programme design
- Management and supervision
- Social &gender norm transformation
- Early detection –children and families at risk
- Strengthening child protection structures
- Deliver basic social services
- Community sensitization
- Build and harness community partnerships
- Livelihoods development /IGAs
- Case management
- Counselling and psychosocial support
- Reporting
- Referral and linkages to resource systems
- Direct income support /social assistance

Why invest in SSW Strengthening?....

Child protection and delivery of other services to address multiple vulnerabilities is not <u>charity</u>.

Requires specialised skills, knowledge & specific competences, and some theoretical grounding.

Demands high level ethical decision making and professional accountability.

Inadequately prepared, and/or unsupported workforce could do more harm to an already vulnerable population.

A high quality, effective and efficient workforce does not <u>just</u> happen – requires carefully planning, developing and supporting the workforce in a sustainable manner.

SSW Strengthening Framework

Framework for Strengthening the Social Service Workforce –What works?

Planning the Workforce

- Adopt a strategic approach to planning the SSW
- Collect and share HR data and promote datadriven decision making
- Improve recruitment, hiring, and deployment practices and systems
- Build alliances to strengthen leadership and advocacy among stakeholders



Supporting the Workforce

- Develop or strengthen systems to improve, sustain and regulate the \$\$W
- Develop tools, resources and initiatives to improve job satisfaction and retention
- Support professional associations in their efforts to enhance the professional growth and development of the SSW

Country
specific
context,
including
social welfare,
justice and
child
protection
systems,
cultural, local
legislation,
labor market,
economy

Developing the Workforce

- Align education and training for SSW with effective workforce planning efforts
- Ensure curricula incorporate both local/indigenous knowledge as well as international best practices for improving the well-being of children and families
- Strengthen faculty and teaching methods
- Provide broad range of professional development opportunities for workers



Issues & Challenges

Planning the workforce

Lack of
comprehensive
information on the
existing workforce:
Who, what, where...

Projected human resource requirements for child protection services

Gaps in recruitment,
hiring and
deployment
practices: Roles Vs
qualification & skills

Limited clarity on who constitutes the workforce

Limited info & planning of the community based para-professional workforce

Low staffing levels – established & filled positions

Issues and challenges

Developing the workforce







Weak alignment between education and practice needs Low involvement of practitioners in education

curriculum delivery methods, including planning and delivery of field practice education





Limited specialized training at post graduate level

Limited opportunities for continuous professional development

Issues and Challenges

Supporting the Workforce

Poor remuneration and tooling

Gaps in support supervision, mentorship & coaching

Lack of adequate financial and logistical support e.g. physical infrastructure, Means of Transport

Absence of strong professional associations for lobby, visibility, advocacy, and support

Absence of legislation and institutional mechanisms for regulation of SSW

Conclusions & Implications

- ► There is increasing recognition of the role and importance of the Social Service Workforce in the child protection sector across countries .
- Recent child protection system strengthening endeavours have brought to bear, the need to pay more attention to the workforce
- Strengthening the social service workforce is a strategic undertaking that has to be intentional and systematic.
 - Short Medium-long term goals accompanied by action
- Important: Identifying where we are and where we want to be and crafting out the road map.

Suggestions

> Planning

- Mapping of the available social service workforce at country level
- Develop a SSW
 strengthening framework
 that specifies goals,
 objectives, strategies and
 resource requirements
- Streamline recruitment and deployment practices in both government and nongovernmental sectors
- Establish/Improve mechanisms for systematic and up-to-date data on the SSW

Developing

- Develop and implement a competency framework for different cadres of the SSW at national level
- Strengthen partnerships to improve education and training –Education &Practice
- CPD: Plan and implement regular inservice training according to priority skills and competences – motivate uptake

> Supporting

- Evidence based advocacy and lobby for increased resource allocation to child protection services.
- Strengthen Supervision and mentorship
- Strengthen professional associations mutual support, lobby, advocacy, CPD.
- Strengthen linkages between govt & non-governmental workforce.
- Progressively improve work environment & employment terms & conditions

