



# 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?

# Who Constitutes the Social Service Workforce?

4



Professionals And  
Para-professionals



Governmental  
And Non-  
governmental  
Workforce



Paid And Unpaid  
Workers

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

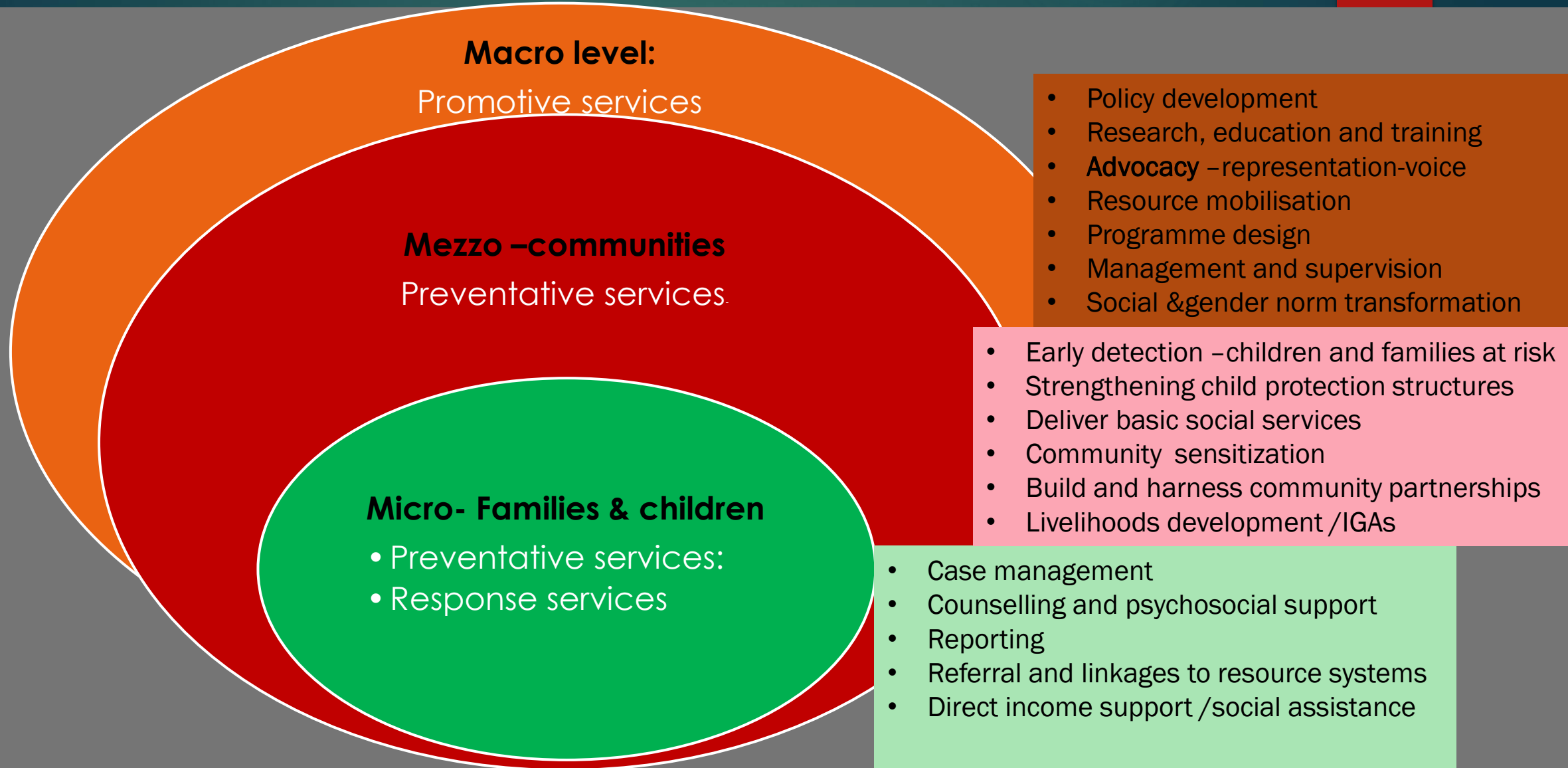
<https://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/>

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

5



# Why invest in SSW Strengthening?....

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Child protection and delivery of other services to address multiple vulnerabilities is not charity.

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

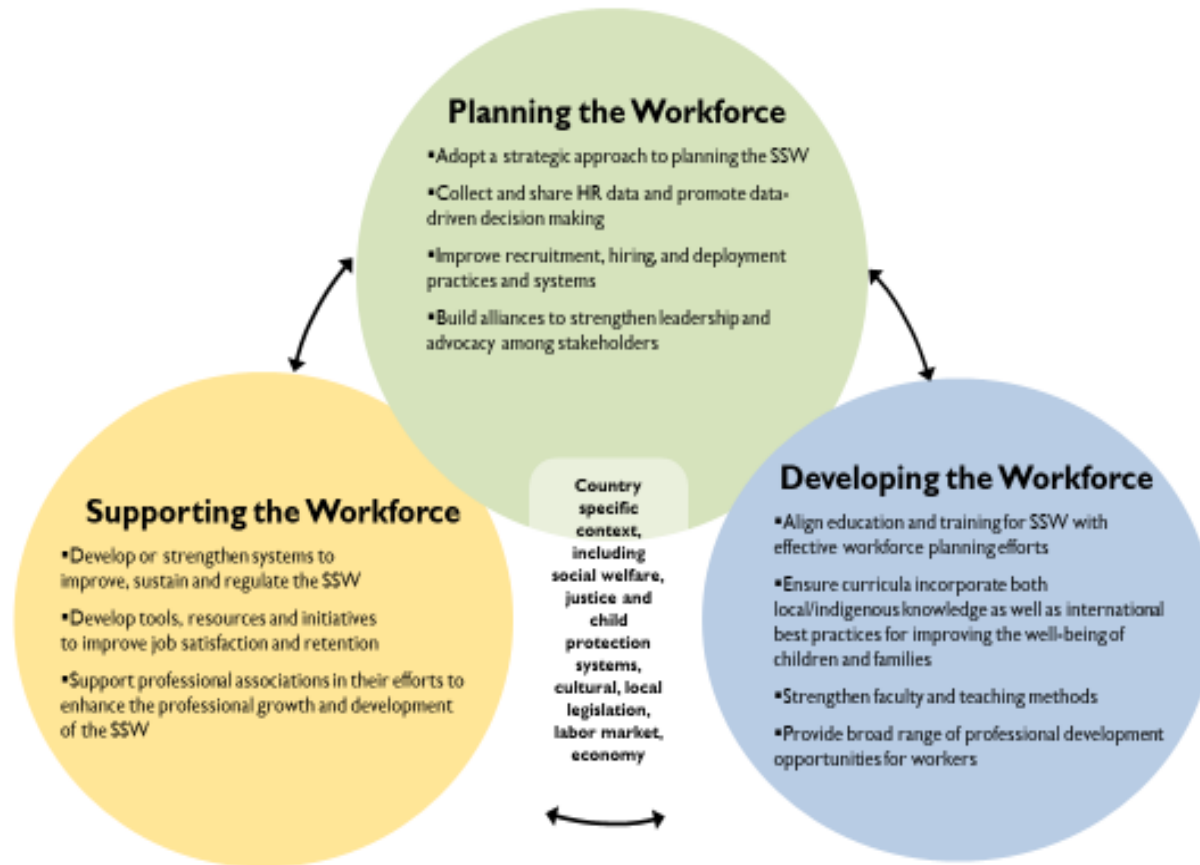
Demands high level ethical decision making and professional accountability.

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

A high quality, effective and efficient workforce does not just 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?



# 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**





**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

*Developing the  
workforce*

## 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 in-service 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

THANK YOU!

