

## **Background**

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance launched the Ambassador Program in September 2016. The program was created to aid the Alliance in raising awareness and support for social service workers who create protective environments for healthy development and wellbeing by tackling poverty, reducing discrimination, promoting social justice and mobilizing community support for the provision of services to care for and support those who need it most. Ultimately, a stronger social service workforce will lead to improved lives for the world's most vulnerable populations. As a convener organization, the Alliance is committed to bringing together individuals from across sectors and around the world to promote the knowledge and evidence, resources and tools, and political will and action needed to address key social service workforce challenges.

A cohort of eight Ambassadors was selected to serve a two-year term after a competitive application process. Ambassadors began their terms following a three-day workshop at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center in Italy. A grant from the Foundation enabled the Ambassadors and Alliance staff to meet in-person to establish goals for the year and develop additional skills in supporting workforce strengthening efforts. Over the duration of the two-year program, Ambassadors are building and applying leadership skills in this sector; learning how to grow their networks at the local, regional and international levels to build additional awareness and support for workforce strengthening efforts; learning how to advocate for additional support and policy change including drafting advocacy plans, and increasing the reach of the Alliance in growing its membership base dedicated to furthering these efforts.

The Alliance is supporting their activities as a group by convening and leading the cohort to engage stakeholders across all sectors to better plan, develop and support the social service workforce. The Alliance shares access to legislative and policy briefs, technical publications, information on engaging with current and new members and groups, opportunities to participate in events, and avenues for sharing skills and experiences with a wider audience to foster collaboration and networking amongst the cohort of Ambassadors.

Ambassadors are driven by a common goal of strengthening the social service workforce through workforce-supportive policies and strategies at national, regional and global levels. As leaders in their sectors and roles within the social service workforce, they bring diverse approaches to workforce strengthening and best practices in advocacy efforts. Through monthly conference calls, the Ambassadors exchange innovative ideas, best practices and discuss challenges in order to inform policy and advocate for increased resources. Within the group, Ambassadors are also circulating materials from their regions to support each other's work. Creating lasting change at the local, national and international levels requires discourse on the topic of workforce strengthening efforts, greater awareness of the reasons that increased efforts that support this workforce are needed, and directly learning from others who have had success in doing so.

Ambassadors and Alliance staff met again in person in Arusha, Tanzania, in September 2017 in the context of the Psychosocial Support Forum hosted by REPSSI. Ambassadors presented at the Forum on panels related to their advocacy work and experience of best practice in case management. Following the Forum, a one-day meeting was held to discuss progress to date, plan for the second year of their term and lay the groundwork for future Ambassador cohorts. This document highlights some of their individual and group outcomes over the first year, future goals and their recommendations for future years.

## Alliance Ambassador Workforce Strengthening Initiatives

Each Ambassador has established individual goals and reported on their progress over the first year toward those goals as well as future steps they plan to take in year two.

### Michael Byamukama

#### Uganda Country Representative, Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), Uganda/East and Southern Africa region

Based in Kampala, Michael oversees REPSSI operations in Uganda and social service workforce training. He is part of the team that created training curricula used throughout East and Southern Africa Region, including the psychosocial training manual, orphan/vulnerable children child protection curriculum and national para-social worker training curriculum. A social worker by training, he is a member of the Uganda National Children Protection Working Group and active in the National Association of Social Workers Uganda.

#### Goal:

Michael has established a primary goal to guide his efforts within Uganda:

- Advocate for and promote workforce-supportive policies, including regulation of the workforce, that enables a motivated social service workforce to effectively deliver quality services to vulnerable populations

#### Achievements:

In order to more effectively advocate for the workforce, Michael has participated in a number of meetings with stakeholders from many sectors and played a key role in drafting workforce-supportive language to be incorporated within new national policies. Some progress includes:

- Sharing social service workforce mapping results in Uganda as the basis for advocating for a Social Work Council to regulate the planning and development of social service workforce.
- Drafting of the social service workforce strategy and incorporation within the Minimum Standards for Comprehensive Services for Children and Young People in the EAC, in collaboration with Alliance Ambassadors Agnes Wasike and Jenny Kaberi
- Participation in the launch of the East Africa Centre for Research and Innovation in Social Work (CRISOWO) at Makerere University to create stronger linkages with researchers for building evidence for workforce-supportive policies
- Keynote speaker at the national World Social Work Day event and presented as part of the pre-conference during the Internal AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa in 2016. One of the key recommendations from the AIDS Conference was the need to build the capacity of the social service workforce like para social workers and other frontline workers at community level with psychosocial skills.
- Incorporation of language about the workforce within Uganda's new National Child Policy
- Advocating for planning and remuneration for the workforce during a forum on national case management practices held by the 4Children Project
- Supporting the Alliance and fellow Ambassadors in development of three panel presentations at the REPSSI Forum in September 2017 in Arusha, Tanzania on the topics of advocacy and case management
- As part of REPSSI team, Michael also advocated for inclusion of the social service workforce as part of the framework for the Southern African Development Community Minimum Package of services for orphans and other vulnerable children

#### Plans for Year Two:

Over the course of the second year of the Ambassador program, Michael plans to continue working closely with his fellow Ambassador in Uganda, Agnes, in advocating for social service workforce strengthening nationally, including through increased investment from the government. During

October 2017, they are organizing a national learning event to bring together stakeholders as part of the discussion on this process. As a member of the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support-Child Protection and Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Reference Group, Michael is also participating in the Child Protection in Humanitarian Action Global Meeting in Uganda in September 2017 to advocate for greater investment in the social service workforce. As part of his ongoing efforts to engage with CRISOWO for building the evidence base on the social service workforce, he has submitted a joint abstract with Agnes and Jennifer Kaberi, Alliance Ambassador in Kenya, to present at their March 2018 conference in Kigali, Rwanda, on the topic of advocating for the social service workforce to achieve greater workforce-supportive policies nationally. Michael will also continue efforts to advocate to the Parliament of Uganda in including and approving workforce-supportive policies and legislation, and advocating as part of the REPSSI team for inclusion of the workforce in policy documents throughout Southern Africa. He is providing monthly articles to local media to gain greater awareness and support of the workforce.

---

### **Jane Calder**

#### **Regional Advisor for Child Protection in Asia, Save the Children, Thailand/Asia region**

With 30 years of experience working in, managing and advising programs for vulnerable children in numerous Asian countries, Uganda, Tanzania and the United Kingdom, Jane is currently leading Save the Children's global initiative to train and accredit all child protection staff members worldwide. Based in Bangkok, Jane holds a regional role that includes leading efforts in India to develop social work training and working with the government in China to pilot the child protection system. Jane is also co-chair of Save the Children's Global Task Group on Child Protection Systems Strengthening and recently co-facilitated a regional Learning Event to draw on Save the Children's experience in strengthening child protection systems and develop guidance for country teams in relation to protection systems. Jane has also led in recent months, on the development of Save the Children's Common Approach on Case Management, an organizationally endorsed set of guidance on case management.

#### Goals:

Jane has established several goals for strengthening the workforce in the area of child protection:

- Establishment a Global Community of Practice on Child Protection systems within Save the Children
- Help to clearly articulate the important role of the social service workforce in protecting children from violence and abuse in new global strategies and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children

#### Achievements:

To realize these goals, Jane has involved new and existing stakeholders working in the area of child protection:

- Establishment of the Child Protection Systems Task Group across Save the Children globally, jointly chaired by Jane and a humanitarian colleague in Save the Children Sweden. The Task Group is mapping the organization's work in supporting the establishment of developing guidance, approaches and the means for establishing child protection systems, including development of the Common Approach for Case Management that includes social service workforce training and accreditation, in the last year. The leadership of this group has also involved providing technical support to the drafting of guidance on Para Social Workers drawing from existing resources from the Alliance and the American International Health Alliance.

- Sharing materials and best practices from the Common Approach for Case Management through the Alliance's Interest Group on Case Management, Tools and Resources Sub-group
- Standardization of job descriptions within Save the Children for three positions and alignment of child protection competencies for a systematic approach to training and qualifications for Save the Children country staff and programs
- Interest from new donors in supporting competency based training and qualifications in India to extend geographical coverage of the initiative. In India, the Save the Children team is using a competency based approach to support the national Integrated Child Protection Scheme to train and ultimately accredit government protection staff. Currently, staff within the scheme are drawn from many different professions and lack training and qualifications for the positions they are expected to fill.
- Mapping of five child protection areas. Save the Children is working on within the general area of child protection systems, and one of the five areas is social service workforce strengthening.
- Presentations at national and regional conferences, including speaking at a regional workshop on child trafficking, presenting at an international conference in Bangkok on Online Child Sexual Abuse violence, supporting Save the Children's presentation at the International Alternative Care conference held in Geneva in October 2016 and collaboratively organizing and speaking at a conference in China on child protection. Presentations included data from violence against children surveys and global statistics to create the case for a stronger social service workforce to address the problem.

#### Plans for Year Two:

The shocking data from the KnowViolence Study around the numbers of children who experience violence in childhood will also be an advocacy area. Jane is finalizing the Case Management Common Approach for Save the Children and will be supporting the development of a toolkit for this approach. This will include guidance on the roles and responsibilities of social workers, para social workers and community volunteers in relation to case management. Pursuing donor funding in support of strengthening the social service workforce and training of staff on child protection will also continue to be an important effort throughout the year.

#### **Jennifer Kaberi**

#### **National Coordinator, Children Agenda Forum, and Founder, Mtoto News, Kenya**

A development worker with a special focus on holistic development for children, Jenny is currently coordinating the Children Agenda Forum hosted by the African Institute for Children Studies that brings together 140 civil society organizations that work with children in Kenya to strengthen policies and services for advocacy and policy change in the area of child protection. In 2017 she launched Mtoto News, an online news platform focused on raising awareness for child protection, children's rights and child justice. She has previously worked in Malawi as an OVC technical advisor and is a 2016 YALI Regional East Africa Leadership Center Fellow.

#### Goal:

Driven by her experiences and interests in child protection, children's rights and child justice, Jenny has established a goal focused on this area.

- Strengthen the social service workforce to play a key role in ending violence against children toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16.2

#### Achievements:

Through her work with the Children Agenda Forum, Jenny is able to convene many stakeholders to

advocate for greater political will for children's protection and development. Working collaboratively toward the best interests of the child has resulted increased workforce-supportive policies over the last year.

- Inclusion of the social service workforce in the new Children's Act in Kenya. Through her connections, Jenny involved child-focused civil society organizations from four continents in developing and reviewing the framework and language about the social service workforce.
- Increase in budget allocations by the Department of Children's Services by 20% from \$800M to \$1.2B, resulting in employment of an additional 250 children officers and 120 social protection officers due to sharing common advocacy messages from the child-focused civil society organizations that are connected through the Children Agenda Forum
- Increase in Alliance members within Kenya by nearly double to 67 total
- Strengthened partnerships with the government (National Council for Children's Services in Kenya and Department of Child Services) and non-governmental organizations including the Girl Child Network and the Kenya Alliance for the Advancement of Children
- Inclusion of the social service workforce within the East Africa Child Policy and the Minimum Standards for Comprehensive Services for Children and Young People in the EAC, working with Alliance Ambassadors Michael Byamukama and Agnes Wasike
- Participation in the African Partnership on Ending Violence against Children, including advocating for inclusion of the social service workforce as a key component of the partnership strategies
- Launching Mtoto News as an online platform for the exchange of news and best practices in child's rights and gaining attention of other media to share workforce-related news

#### Plans for Year Two:

Jenny has led discussions between the three different associations for social workers within Kenya to bring them together under one association and continues to strive for one unified social work body. She is also a part of an ongoing dialogue between the UNICEF Kenya and UNICEF ESARO office on a joint social service workforce strengthening project. Jenny remains committed to building relationships with academia and institutions toward professionalization of the social service workforce. One avenue for connecting with this target audience is participation in the CRISOWO Conference in Rwanda in March 2018. Jenny has submitted a joint abstract with Alliance Ambassadors Michael Byamukama and Agnes Wasike for a panel presentation on advocating for workforce-supportive policies. In the coming year Jenny will also work with the national government to increase support and inclusion of the social service workforce on national guidelines aimed at ending violence against children toward fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals.

---

#### **Motshidisi Patricia Maquina**

#### **Senior Mentor for Community Child and Youth Care Workers in the Isibindi Model, National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW), South Africa**

With 27 years of experience as a child and youth care worker, she has worked in a number of settings in the provision of services for orphans and vulnerable children. These include managing professional foster care services and working with NACCW as a senior mentor to other child and youth care workers. She has travelled throughout the region to help implement components of NACCW's Isibindi program.

#### Goals:

Pat is working to further engage with government in support of professionalization of the child and youth care worker (CYCW) cadre within South Africa and regionally.

- Scale up the integrated social service workforce in South Africa through capacity building and working in the best interest of children
- Support the training, development and professionalization of CYCWs regionally

#### Achievements:

Pat has been working toward increasing government recognition and support of child and youth care workers and building capacity of the growing numbers of Isibindi-trained CYCWs.

- Provincial host of the NACCW 21<sup>st</sup> Biennial conference held in Kimberley in July 2017 which included approximately 900 participants including 41 international guests, 18 from other African countries, 181 Government representatives, and hosted the National Isibindi Network Meeting (pre-conference meeting) in partnership with NACCW, government and UNICEF
- Participation in processes promoting multi-disciplinary and integrated case management between CYCWs and other cadres of social service workers
- Promoting the role of CYCWs in key settings, including in schools, healthcare and within the Department of Justice as intermediaries
- Development of the Isibindi Safe Park Model within South Africa as well as in Kenya and Zambia
- Promotion of the development of the Child and Youth Care Degree at different Universities throughout the country
- Contributions to the ongoing consultative process and advocacy of social grants
- Participation in the National Children's Rights Intersectoral committee workshops and National Child Care and Protection Forums promoting the implementation of the Children's Act
- Participation in national consultations on non-Centre based Early Childhood Development (ECD) utilizing CYCWs (Children's Institute initiative).
- Integrating child and youth care work into conversations with government, the South African Council for Social Service Professionals (SACSSP) and UNICEF
- Advocating for the inclusion of child and youth care workers into the draft national action plan for children. The greatest challenge continues to be adequate funding.
- Increasing relations with the South African Council of Social Service Professionals that has resulted in additional cross-information sharing and updates via email and social media being distributed by the SACSSP to their network
- Reviewing the Social Service Practitioners Bill, 2016
- Participation in international meetings including in Canada to discuss social isolationism among first nations and providing guidance to other countries and associations on developing the child and youth care work cadre, including in Zambia
- Advocating for greater integration of child and youth care workers into school settings

#### Plans for Year Two:

Pat's individual efforts and the work of the Isibindi program to strengthen the child and youth care cadre to increase its impact throughout South Africa in the lives of children and families made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS remains ongoing. However, Pat has had to step down from the Ambassador program for year two. The Alliance continues to work with NACCW to build connections with other organizations that share overlapping interests and work in South Africa through Steering Committee representation from NACCW.



**Dr. Suresh Pathare, Professor and Director, Centre for Studies in Rural Development, Institute of Social Work and Research, India**

A social work educator, researcher and practitioner, with teaching, curriculum development, research, consultation and practice experience in social work, Suresh currently teaches social work at the undergraduate and post graduate level and acts as secretary of the National Association of Professional Social Workers in India. He is also conducting a research study with the Global Social Development Innovations, University of North Carolina, on gender equality and women's rights. He has previously organized and advocated for migrant workers, slum dwellers and tribal people in India.

Goals:

Suresh is focusing on professionalization of the social service workforce through greater recognition and regulation. He has established several goals to guide his efforts toward a multi-sectoral approach for the Master's of Social Work at the 600 schools in India to be elevated from a non-professional course toward a professionally recognized degree.

- Increase visibility and understanding of the social service workforce by creating and disseminating contextually relevant resources in local languages
- Advocate for recognition, regulation and standardization of social work education and practice to develop a committed, competent and compassionate social service workforce
- Enhance the skills and capacity of para professionals

Achievements:

Many steps toward professionalization of the workforce have been achieved, and the ground work has been laid for additional involvement of the government in recognizing social work as a valued profession.

- Increasing membership and awareness of national professional associations and the Alliance
- Formation of a Committee to prepare a report on the issues related to recognition and regulation of social work education and practice in Maharashtra state of India toward the development of core competencies for the profession. Suresh is one of the seven members on the Committee.
- Increasing support from the government toward recognition of the role of social workers and paraprofessionals in mental health service provision
- Initiating steps for mapping the social service workforce in India
- Conducting workshops for non-governmental organization workers and community-level workers to enhance current skills and learn new skills
- Celebration of Social Work Week with government departments to mobilize social service workers in activities for a sustainable environment, in alignment with the 2017 theme

Plans for Year Two:

In the coming year, Suresh plans to continue lobbying and networking with government, education and other sectors for the recognition and standardization of social work education and practice in collaboration with National Association of Professional Social workers in India. He will be meeting with the Department of Social Welfare, Department of Health and Department of Education to discuss the next steps in this process. He plans to continue advocating for the registration of social service workers, including social workers and para professional workers in collaboration with schools of social and NGOs operating in India. In his role with the National Association of Social Workers, he is helping put together a bid for hosting a future IFSW Regional Conference. Through connections from Jane Calder, he will also be aligning with Save the Children's focus on development of clear competencies for child protection work and incorporation into government roles, including at the para professional level.

## **Betsy Sherwood, Country Director, CBM International, Haiti/Latin America & Caribbean region**

Currently serving as Country Director of CBM International in Haiti, Betsy oversees daily operations and a staff of 60 social workers, para professional workers and support staff. She previously led the organization's disability and community mental health activities and served as a focal point for gender and child safeguarding for CBM in Latin America and the Caribbean region. She is also working with UNICEF Lebanon on developing disability-inclusive guidelines for the provision of social services in the region.

### Goals:

Betsy has established several goals specific to Haiti and also for strengthening the workforce throughout the region.

- Raise awareness of the efforts of the Alliance in order to strengthen and promote local, culturally and contextually appropriate investments in the social service workforce in order to improve the quality of life of vulnerable children and families
- Formation of a formal national association of social work in Haiti

### Achievements:

Betsy has brought together new groups of workers to share best practices and discuss challenges and is reaching new audiences working in the region.

- Recruiting for two lead psychologists, 12 case managers for making referrals and linkages, and 24 community workers with specialized training, and then leading a series of trainings on child protection and case management, as well as professional standards, self-care, supporting each other and avoiding burn out, for staff hired to provide immediate disaster and humanitarian assistance following the hurricane. A database with the government child protection office is also in development and efforts remain underway to obtain funding to remunerate new and existing staff.
- Hosting a viewing party of the live webcast of the Alliance's Annual Symposium in May 2017, which has led to regular meetings and discussions among the group
- Collaboration with Haiti's Government Office for the well-being of children and families.
- Sharing materials with CBM International Senior Leadership Team and CBM partners working in child protection and community-based programs to increase awareness and collaboration
- Hosting a capacity building project for 45 social service workers. Funding for the project was attained as a result of using Alliance resources and materials to effectively advocate and rationalize investment in the project.
- Speaking as a guest lecturer at Hunter College School of Social Work in New York and presenting at a mental health symposium in Haiti
- Meetings regularly held by Haiti's Social Worker Professional Alliance, an informal professional group
- Increasing awareness in the Alliance through a number of activities, including a blog on the Alliance's website, has led to six new Alliance members in Haiti

### Plans for Year Two:

Betsy plans to expand her outreach in the coming year, focusing on the expansion of involvement of other countries in the Caribbean and Latin America as well as in the Middle East, given some of her increasing contract work in the region. With the lack of social workers graduating in Haiti due to the lack of social work trained professors to review theses, there is a great need for training of para professionals, including para social workers, to help with case loads. Given the lengthy political and humanitarian crisis, there is also a need to integrate systems of care and motivate and retain the workforce. Betsy is involved in the increasing deinstitutionalization work underway in Haiti and is using this work as a catalyst for social service workforce development and multisectoral



collaboration. She is active in social media and plans to share more materials and information via social media and listservs to engage new countries and audiences. She also plans to become more involved in the Interest Group on Case Management to share some of the disability-inclusive materials that are currently in development and also learn from the group. Betsy continues to strive for formalization of a national association of social workers in Haiti that could build upon the smaller, less formal groups of workers who are regularly gathering as a result of the group viewing of the Alliance's Symposium webcast or who meet to network through the Social Worker Professional Alliance.

---

### **Tata Sudrajat, Director of Advocacy and Campaigns, Save the Children International, Indonesia/Southeast Asia region**

Trained in social work and social development with 23 years of experience, Tata has worked within Indonesia in child welfare, child protection and care, social welfare, social development and social protection. In his current role, he is managing advocacy and campaigns at Save the Children, including legal and policy reform to support a recently initiated social work licensing system. Most recently, he led implementation of the national program on family-based care in the prevention of institutionalization, providing direct response with a social work case management approach, and he has presented upon this approach at various international conferences.

#### Goals:

Tata is focusing his efforts toward regulation and registration of a well-trained workforce to support families in alternative efforts underway in Indonesia and has established several goals to guide his efforts.

- Enhancing a certification system for social welfare workers
- Increase recognition that well-trained social workers effectively contribute to the response to child abuse
- Increase the evidence base to show that performance and skills of social workers have meaningful and significant contributions for social welfare development when applying a social work approach

#### Achievements:

Tata has made several accomplishments toward regulating and registering the workforce and his other established goals.

- Development of a certification test for social welfare workers. The first test was conducted in Lampung with support from Save the Children. Following a training, 28 social welfare workers took the test in July 2017.
- Agreement upon the ASEAN Social Work guidelines on child abuse at the 2017 meeting. A timeline has been developed for creation of the guidelines, starting with the Indonesia Social Work Consortium and led by Tata, to be voted upon at the next conference in Malaysia in 2018
- Holding a weeklong event for 2017 World Social Work Day through the Indonesia Association of Professional Social Work that was globally highlighted, including participation within the Alliance hosted webinar on advocacy for WSWD.
- Engaging the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Indonesia Social Work Consortium and other partners at faith-based organizations and non-governmental organizations in developing social work practices.
- Presenting new tools for case management and supervision best practices that have been shared at the International Alternative Care Conference in Geneva in October 2016 and REPSSI Forum September 2017

- Incorporation of case management and supervision tools from Indonesia to be used to influence case management within Myanmar's Department of Social Welfare, being carried out in collaboration with Jane Calder
- Receiving the National Forum of Childcare Institutions Award to a Public Figure for dedication and advocacy on paradigm shift to family based care and quality of childcare, awarded from the government to only 10 people in 2017

#### Plans for Year Two:

During the next year, Tata will be involved in expanding and accelerating the certification system and test to additional parts of the country so that more social welfare workers can be formally certified. A new Level 1 examination will now be held at universities for recently graduated social workers who must pass to obtain certification as part of a bill that is currently in consideration by Parliament and he remains actively involved in advocacy for adoption of the bill. The target of certified social welfare workers is 500 people in 2017. He is also leading the drafting and process for approval through A/ESEAN of the social work guidelines on child abuse. Once the guidelines are formally approved, there will be an extensive training of trainers and conducting courses throughout the region. Tata has established a goal to attract 1000 participants for the World Social Work Day events in 2018, an increase over prior years.

He remains involved in Save the Children's alternative care work and case management best practices, including strengthening of the parenting program and aims to develop evidence-based reports on the effectiveness of the program and has shared and will continue to share many useful resources with the Alliance Case Management Interest Group.

#### **Agnes Mutonyi Wasike**

#### **TPO Uganda Officer seconded to Government Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development as Coordinator of the National Child protection Working Group, Uganda**

Trained as a professional social worker, Agnes coordinates national level, multisectoral child protection stakeholders on policy implementation towards a strengthened child protection system in Uganda. She leads the National Child Protection Working Group, which brings together national stakeholders with a mandate on children from government sectors, UN agencies, international NGOs, academia and civil society to develop workforce-supportive policies and share best practices in child protection through capacity-building.

#### Goal:

Her efforts to bring together diverse stakeholders are driven by two central goals:

- To improve the quality of child and youth care workforce in Uganda
- Attract media attention to the contribution and challenges faced by the child-focused workforce in Uganda

#### Achievements:

Agnes has made many in-roads toward improving the quality of the workforce delivering services to children in Uganda through strategically prioritizing the social service workforce on the agenda of Child Protection Working Group national discussions on child protection and child well-being in general.

- Increasing interest among the media to publicize the contribution and challenges faced by the child-focused workforce in Uganda by inviting media to listen in, document and share national level discussions between the social service workforce and policy makers on the application of laws and policies to improve child well-being at a learning event she convened at the end of October 2017 with support from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

- Advocating for a strong social service workforce as a key strategy in the East Africa Child Policy and the Minimum Standards for Comprehensive Services for Children and Young People in the EAC, working with Alliance Ambassadors Michael Byamukama and Jenny Kaberi, and the attendant plans and strategies. The Social Service Workforce Strengthening Framework developed by the Alliance has been used a key resource in all advocacy efforts.
- Organization of a one-day policy dialogue on the National Policy on Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children based on a Child Protection Working Group drafted Technical Advisory Paper. One of the outcomes was group consensus to include 'strengthening of the social welfare workforce' among the priorities in the national children policy
- Creation of a five-person team consisting of social workers working across several sectors (government, NGOs, UN agency, Social Work Department at Makerere University and a civil society organization). The group meets periodically to review and analyze trends and practices in child care and protection particularly case management through the national child helpline.
- Secured endorsement from government for training the first ever cohort of national trainer of trainers in child safeguarding selected from child and youth care workers in Uganda
- Facilitating strategic involvement of the National Association of Social Workers in Uganda (NASWU) in stakeholder meetings with the social development sector to reiterate the need for investing in developing and regulating social work practice as well as engaging NASWU in the process of developing a comprehensive national case management system

#### Plans for Year Two:

Over the second year of the program, Agnes plans to further engage media in helping to raise awareness and interest in social service workforce strengthening efforts. She will co-facilitate identification of opportunities and involvement of the government to disseminate national violence against children results to the media as well as enlist media to further disseminate results. She is also supporting government efforts on the development of an integrated national case management system in Uganda within a child protection framework. Through an ongoing review of reports to the National Child Helpline, trends and best practices in case conferencing are being determined. As a result of the topic being discussed among the Ambassadors on group calls, Agnes is continuing to advocate for the inclusion of the social service workforce costs in the National Action Plan on Violence Against Children. She will continue to work closely with Michael Byamukama and the National Association of Social Workers Uganda as part of the national team working for recognition, regulation and remuneration of the social service workforce. Within her work-scope, Agnes has among other things prioritized the convening of a national level learning event on child well-being that enabled the social service workforce to interface with policy makers in discussing practical challenges in application of the laws and policies on children, as well as to jointly generate workable solutions. This event will now be an annual event to bring together service providers and policy makers to discuss service delivery for children.

### **Group Achievements in Year One**

At the workshop in September 2016, Ambassadors identified a need for a compendium of advocacy materials. While many different tools exist or pieces of information can be found from many different organizations, there was an expressed need for readily available infographics, narratives, fact sheets and other compelling materials to make the case for strengthening the social service workforce. During the workshop, Ambassadors established objectives and goals, determined key audiences and developed messages to convey the need for a stronger workforce to meet the needs of vulnerable groups. These discussions and work to develop a common advocacy approach led to the creation of the [Global Advocacy Toolkit for the Social Service Workforce](#).

Creating a common narrative or a common advocacy goal has different meaning for different people, but implies a desire to use the same starting point of facts and messaging when developing a joint advocacy movement. Research by Shiffman and Smith shows that the widespread use of a common narrative can be a key factor in gaining political priority for social and health issues. The Global Advocacy Toolkit was created to provide advocates with a common set of tools and messages with which to bring about greater political and programmatic priority for strengthening the social service workforce. The toolkit is research-based and includes desktop research and interviews to inform the variety of tools within the kit that can be locally adapted for advocating at all levels. Formally launched in June 2017, the toolkit and infographics have been downloaded from the Alliance's website nearly 350 times in just three months' time and was widely promoted by the Ambassadors and Alliance in September during the REPSSI Forum and Social Service Workforce Week.

## **Group Goals for Year Two**

When the Ambassadors came together in September 2017, they discussed establishing a group goal for year two that they could work toward together and also align their individual workplans. They appreciated the guidance toward their individual activities during the first year but expressed interest in tackling a larger issue as a group during the second year. They discussed many of the challenges currently facing the workforce that they could help to address. They recognize that the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) offer a great opportunity to increase momentum for the social service workforce by highlighting the importance of the workforce to carry out the groundwork that will achieve these goals. In particular, they reviewed some of the ways that the workforce is addressing health challenges toward meeting SDG 3, supporting refugees and migrants toward meeting SDGs 10 and 15, and ensuring child well-being toward meeting SDGs 4, 5, 8, 11, 15. With the increased focus on ending violence against children under SDG 16.2 through new efforts being led by UNICEF to launch the Global Partnership to End Violence and development of the seven strategies for ending violence against children within the INSPIRE package recently developed by the World Health Organization, as well as new data from KnowViolence that shows violence against children affects 75% of all children globally, Ambassadors believe the time is ripe for making a direct connection between the role of social service workers and prevention of all forms of violence against children.

This goal supports concepts that arose at the Alliance Steering Committee in May 2017 to develop a strategy for increased support at the national level for social service workforce strengthening to best position social service workers to actively address and prevent violence against children. Violence against children is an issue that impacts overall health and well-being and requires a multisectoral response. A call to action will be developed and customized to various stakeholder groups, including governments and funders, with the intent to bring groups together to jointly develop national strategies that are inclusive of the social service workforce and advocate for a well-planned, well-developed and well-supported workforce that is adequately funded and staffed. Ambassadors will aid in engaging key stakeholders in development of the call to action and sign on in early 2018.

## **Impact of the Ambassador Program**

Information exchange between Ambassadors and the Alliance has been multi-directional. Ambassadors have actively supported initiatives led by the Alliance. They participated in in-depth interviews with consultants for creation of the Global Advocacy Toolkit as well as strategic thinking exercises that led to the development of the Alliance's 2018-2020 strategy. They have widely distributed materials within their networks to engage many new audiences in Social Service Workforce Week 2017 and solicited detailed responses to the questionnaire on how workers are helping families affected by violence that will be incorporated into the Alliance's 2017 annual report.

They are also keeping the Alliance apprised of new studies, data and resources on workforce-supportive policies, trends and best practices so that the Alliance can continue to fulfill its mission of promoting knowledge and evidence through distribution of these tools among Alliance members and supporters.

The group believes the program has supported their current work but also provided new opportunities, such as presenting at conferences, engaging new stakeholder groups and growing their networks. They have learned some new skills for effectively advocating and been involved in development of new workforce-supportive policies. “It has been an area of professional growth,” said Agnes Wasike.

Ambassadors hold monthly calls to exchange information and discuss progress toward group activities and provide mentorship to each other that has benefitted their individual work and increased global attention for workforce strengthening.

For example, they shared that when attending high-level national and regional meetings, the additional role of Alliance Ambassador provided them more clout and their input was more seriously considered. They reported that the mutual exchange of information within the group has been “enriching and energizing” and “engaging,” allowing them to experience achievements they otherwise would not have been able to complete or undertake. Additional examples included sharing language from drafted policies and legislation about the workforce to incorporate into new national bills, training on use of social media to use Twitter and Facebook as an outreach tool among existing and new networks, writing blogs and profiles to increase understanding on the varied roles of the workforce, and providing templates and slides for incorporation into conference presentations. As Jenny was developing new ways to recognize social workers within social work associations in Kenya, others in the group shared examples of the types of awards and other recognition from their national association. As Jane was working on definitions of coordination mechanisms, others shared input on how this is viewed in their area. Agnes is working to increase media attention and relied on experiences from others in the group and the Alliance on successful approaches.

## **Future of the Ambassador Program**

Alliance Ambassadors discussed the merits of the Ambassador Program and unanimously supported continuation of the program for a second cohort in 2018-2020.

As the Alliance promotes the program and opens applications for 2018, they urged the Alliance to consider ways to expand representation in the program to new countries and regions as well as other cadres within the social service workforce. They see a need for translation of additional materials, including into Arabic and Portuguese, to reach new audiences and currently underrepresented regions within the program as well among the Alliance membership.

Current Ambassadors expressed a desire to remain involved in a mentorship capacity to the new cohort to share some of the lessons they’ve learned in effectively advocating for workforce strengthening. If funding allows, it was suggested to bring the current cohort and future cohort together for the initial orientation. Ambassadors suggested that the format of the program remain the same, with individual goals during the first year and a group goal during the second year.

As the Alliance continues to expand its reach, current Ambassadors remain actively engaged with the Alliance and as new Ambassadors are recruited, it is expected that all groups will continue to benefit from an increased exchange of information and sharing new knowledge, ultimately leading to greater political will for a stronger social service workforce that can fully meet the needs of vulnerable populations in all communities.