



# May Ann C. Demetrio

## Child Protection Social Worker, Child Protection Unit, Philippine General Hospital, Philippines



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### **Why Social Work?**

Having a passion for uplifting those in need runs in May Ann's family. Inspired and encouraged by her aunt, May Ann decided to follow in her footsteps and pursue a career in social work. She now works in child protection in Manila, the capital of the Philippines, and two surrounding provinces, providing services and support to vulnerable children and their families.

### **The impact of her work**

May Ann conducts safety and risk assessments for children who have experienced sexual assault and trauma. This important work determines whether the child is safe to stay in the home, assesses family dynamics with regard to how members interact with each other, and evaluates the community in which the child lives through interviewing neighbors.

In most instances, the child's family becomes closer following incidents of violence, providing love and support to the child. Family support is very important to the healing process, making sure the child knows he/she is loved and supported.

Child Protection Units (CPU) involve a multidisciplinary team that includes doctors who do medico-legal evaluation, forensic interview, management of sexually transmitted infections, developmental assessment, and expert testimony in court cases; mental health service providers who provide mental health evaluation, therapy for children with problematic sexual behavior and individual and group therapy; legal professionals who provide legal counseling and family court awareness/kids court; and police officers who conduct investigations, on-site case filing and forensic interviews.

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For school-based interventions and support, 4R Training (Recognizing, Recording, Reporting and Referral) is provided to teachers and guidance counselors. School visits are conducted weekly and cases are referred to CPUs when needed. Social workers coordinate with guidance counselors with regards to the cases that need case conferences and convene case conferences when necessary with schools. These cases require extra care in handling because minors are involved.

Social workers like May Ann who conduct safety and risk assessments also provide a sense of reassurance to the family by cultivating a relationship grounded in trust and deep listening. Families, especially in remote areas, have demonstrated appreciation that social workers provide these services including follow-up on any emotional or behavioral changes in children as a result of the trauma they have experienced. They also work closely with parents on how to best support their children at school and at home as they work through the healing process.

### **Skills and competencies needed for this work**

May Ann earned her Bachelor's degree in Social Work and she participates in on-going trainings provided through the Child Protection team. The Child Protection Units regularly invite doctors, psychologists, police and social workers to joint trainings on how to manage challenging cases in order to become familiar with one another's work and responsibilities. She is now completing a Master's in Social Work in Healthcare Settings.

As a social worker averaging about 200 cases throughout the year, May Ann stresses the importance of receiving quality supervision when managing challenging cases. Both individually and in small groups, child protection social workers such as May Ann have the opportunity to debrief, process their emotions and brainstorm strategies. Part of the debriefing process includes team building activities and team outings. May Ann feels that this sense of teamwork and quality supervision are necessary to providing quality services to children and families.



## **“Improving the workforce. Improving lives.”**

### **Who is the social service workforce?**

The social service workforce is defined as being comprised of the variety of workers - government and non-government, paid and unpaid - who contribute to the care, support, promotion of rights and empowerment of vulnerable populations served by the social service system.

### **What is Social Service Workforce Week?**

During this week, advocates will bring attention to and build support for the social service workforce as well as raise awareness about promising workforce strengthening efforts supported by stakeholders around the world. Organized around daily themes, the week is an opportunity for Alliance members and the public to engage in discussions and exchange ideas. Daily blogs, worker profiles and resources provide tools and innovative approaches for strengthening the workforce.

### **What is the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance?**

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance works toward a world where a well-planned, well-trained and well-supported social service workforce effectively delivers promising practices that improve the lives of vulnerable populations. Launched in June 2013, the mission of the Alliance is to promote the knowledge and evidence, resources and tools and political will and action needed to address key social service workforce challenges, especially within low- to middle-income countries.

The Alliance is funded by PEPFAR/USAID and the GHR Foundation. The Tides Center acts as host and fiscal sponsor of the Alliance.

### **Learn More**

Learn more about **May Ann** and other social service workers! Join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtag #SSWeek, on our Facebook page and on the discussion boards on our website at [www.socialserviceworkforce.org](http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org).