A strong social service workforce is comprised of paid and unpaid, governmental and nongovernmental professionals and para professionals working to ensure the healthy development and well-being of children and families. Failing to strengthen the workforce means limiting the effectiveness of programs and wasting valuable resources. The following strategies and examples illustrate how a well-planned, well-developed, and well-supported workforce is better equipped to support families and children to reach their full potential and better recover from emergency situations and crises.

A strong social service workforce is an investment in the resilience of our society.
Align education and training for the workforce with effective planning efforts

Through a strategic mapping of the Child Protection in Emergencies sector ensuring the well-being of children in conflict and disaster situations, practitioners were able to determine the barriers to training of practitioners and align skill needs in an emergency situation with specific training efforts.  

Ensure curricula incorporate both local/indigenous knowledge as well as international best practices

In Afghanistan, community child protection workers and service users determined competency standards and then with government and international experts, developed national social work standards and training curricula for three levels of social workers.  

Strengthen faculty and teaching methods

In the UK, job satisfaction for social workers ensuring child well-being is closely linked with graduates’ beliefs about preparedness for the job. Of all the social workers not satisfied with their job, 33% said they did not feel prepared for it. By adapting teaching methods and fieldwork to job requirements, schools can ensure that students are prepared and have a higher job satisfaction.

Provide broad range of professional development opportunities for workers

Ensuring pre-service and in-service training opportunities for child welfare workers in the US showed a positive impact on retaining workers, reducing turnover costs and ensuring positive program outcomes for children and their families.
Policy and decision-makers can ensure the resilience of our society by investing in the planning, development and support of the social service workforce to give them the tools and resources they need to tackle the most pressing issues facing us today.

Visit socialserviceworkforce.org to learn more about how you can strengthen the social service workforce.