

BEST PRACTICES OF INTEGRATING THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE INTO NATIONAL ACTION PLANS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN



As professionals and paraprofessionals working to protect children and families, social service workers are at the frontlines of addressing and preventing violence against children. Ensuring that the social service workforce of a country is adequately integrated into that country's national action plan to end violence against children is vital to advancing the rights of all children to safe, healthy, and happy lives.

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance has identified three strategies to strengthen the social service workforce: planning, developing, and supporting the workforce. Each strategy has elements that countries can implement to guide the strengthening of their local workforces.

This document will show examples of the "promising practices" of integrating social services into national action plans to end violence against children. This document will highlight examples from Tanzania and Montenegro, two pathfinder countries of the Global Partnership to End Violence that have prominently referenced social service workforce strengthening within their national plans of action.

PLANNING THE WORKFORCE

- Adopt a strategic approach to planning the social welfare workforce.
- Collect and share HR data and promote data-driven decision making.
- Improve recruitment, hiring, and deployment practices and systems that take into account urban, peri-urban, and rural areas and decentralization plans.
- Build alliances and coalitions to strengthen leadership and advocacy among a broad range of stakeholders.

Tanzania

The National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children in Tanzania is a good example of how differences between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas can be taken into account in recruitment, hiring, and deployment practices. The plan differentiates between different requirements at district, regional and ward level, and stresses regional capacity building for its social service workforce. Additionally, it states that one social welfare officer should be assigned per district to be dedicated to schools as a reporting and referral mechanism of violence against children in school settings.

Montenegro

Montenegro's national action plan offers an example of building alliances and coalitions to strengthen leadership and advocacy among a broad range of stakeholders. The plan calls for a Child Protection Directorate to be set up by 2018 in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. It also mandates that teams of professionals (a psychologist and social worker) exist for each court and prosecution office by 2021, combining the justice system, the health system, and the social service sector to collectively combat violence against children.

Other examples

Cambodia's national action plan to end violence against children includes the development of sector-specific data collection and reporting procedures for multiple sectors, including social services.



DEVELOPING THE WORKFORCE

- Align education and training for the social service workforce 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 a broad range of in-service professional development opportunities for workers.

Tanzania

Tanzania's national action plan to end violence against children calls for mainstreaming violence against women and children into the training curriculum for social workers.

Montenegro

The national action plan of Montenegro recommends including modules on violence against children in curricula for pre-service training in all departments that train people who will work with children by 2021, including social services. It also includes ongoing training and professional development of the workforce in order to strengthen the capacity of social services staff in protecting the victims of violence.

Other examples

France's national action plan to end violence against children calls for seminars on violence for members of the social service and health workforces, especially those who will work with students, for both initial pre-service and ongoing training.

SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE

- Develop or strengthen systems to improve and sustain social service workforce performance.
- Develop tools, resources and initiatives to improve job satisfaction and retention.
- Support professional associations in their efforts to enhance the growth and development of the social service workforce.

Tanzania

Tanzania's differentiation of regional, district, and ward-level needs for its social service workforce and its emphasis on regional capacity building is one example of how a country can develop and strengthen systems to sustain local social service workforce performance.

Montenegro

The national action plan for Montenegro states that professional development programmes for relevant professionals working with children victims of violence should be designed by 2021 in order to support the growth and development of the social service workforce.

Other examples

Cambodia's national action plan provides multiple examples of ways to strengthen systems to improve and sustain social service workforce performance, including in supporting social service providers to develop group parenting interventions for families at risk of violence and in developing a centralized referral mechanism between the social service workforce and mental health services.