

Scope of Work

Consultancy to develop a technical note on the optimal role of the Social Service Workforce in child protection in school settings

Background

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (Alliance) is currently developing a range of technical notes and guidance under a Programme Cooperation Agreement with UNICEF Child Protection Section, Programme Division, New York Headquarters: ‘An evidence-based investment case for social service workforce strengthening’. One activity under this agreement is to: ‘Develop a technical note on the optimal role of the social service workforce in schools in prevention and response to violence.’

Purpose

The purpose of this consultancy is to develop a concise but well evidenced technical note on the optimal role and functions of the social service workforce (SSW) in schools in child protection. The technical note will analyze and summarize the main approaches and models in this field of work. It will also highlight the key ingredients of promising practice in this area of work, from a range of contexts, in particular low- and middle-income countries in development contexts, with a focus on government-run schools (under the responsibility of Ministries of Education). This will help to guide and inform education sector policy makers and program managers.

Definition of Social Service Workforce¹

An inclusive concept referring to a broad range of governmental and nongovernmental professionals and paraprofessionals who work with children, youth, adults, older persons, families and communities to ensure healthy development and well-being. The social service workforce focuses on preventative, responsive and promotive services that are informed by the humanities and social sciences, indigenous knowledges, discipline-specific and interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, and ethical principles.

Social service workers engage people, structures and organizations to facilitate access to needed services, alleviate poverty, challenge and reduce discrimination, promote social justice and human rights, and prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and family separation.

The social service workforce constitutes a broad array of practitioners, researchers, managers and educators, including, but not limited to, social workers, social educators, social pedagogues, child care workers, youth workers, child and youth care workers, community development workers/community liaison officers, community workers, welfare officers, social/cultural animators and case managers. While social work and social pedagogy have the advantage of history, and are quite dominant in the sector, other categories of professionals and paraprofessionals have evolved over time and make invaluable contributions to ensuring human well-being and development.’

¹ <http://socialserviceworkforce.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Definition-Social-Service-Workforce.pdf>

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Policy issues to cover in the technical note

Child protection challenges, which suitable deployment of SSW in schools could address:

There are a range of child protection issues, and student welfare issues linked to child protection, that schools could help prevent or respond to better, with appropriate, well-planned and resourced SSW capacity – including a social worker, psychologist, counsellor, social pedagogue or similar professional designation:

- Supporting holistic development of the child – not only intellectual, but also psychological, emotional, physical, social and cultural, and taking account of potential external stressors in their lives (from their families and communities).
- Preventing and addressing all forms of violence against children – in the school, in the family and in the community, including physical, emotional and sexual.
- Child and adolescent mental health, including self-harm and suicide.
- Sexual reproductive health, adolescent pregnancy and other health issues relevant to children and young people.
- Tackling bullying and promoting positive peer relationships – both in person and online.
- Enabling effective learning and academic achievement, by identifying and addressing factors impacting a student's learning in their peer, family or community relationships.
- Preventing early school dropout, including in relation to child labour and exploitation, and child marriage.
- Promoting inclusion of children of all backgrounds, needs and abilities, and preventing and addressing stigma and discrimination of refugees and migrants, and in relation to mental health, disability, nationality, race, gender and sexuality.

Different issues related to how SSW are or could be deployed and managed in schools, or linked to schools, that this paper could explore and compare (the exact focus to be discussed and agreed with the consultant at the inception stage):

- Training and appointing one or several teachers, and/or school nurse, to support wider student welfare, in addition to their teaching responsibilities. What level of seniority, professional background would be most suitable for such a designated teacher? What would be the core competences required?
- The whole school approach, with all teachers and staff trained in supporting holistic student well-being, to be more emotionally aware and sensitive, to identify, prevent and respond to any form of violence, compared with employing a specialist or team of specialists in that role.
- Appointing a social service worker, with specialist training whose role would be to wholly focus on the above welfare issues. What are the benefits of this specialist approach, as opposed to the options above of additional training for one teacher or several teachers, or for all teachers?
- Required SSW qualifications, training and core competences to work in schools: the comparative benefits of different professional qualification and specialisations, including social worker, psychologist, counsellor or social pedagogue.
- Training, supervision and peer-support systems for teachers and school managers.
- SSW's scope of responsibility in schools: the extent to which the specialist in this role is expected to focus only on internal issues (the student's learning and in-school behaviour or relationship issues, preventing and addressing in-school violence and bullying), or also identifies and addresses external issues affecting the child's overall welfare (including violence in the family or community; family relationships; trafficking, child labour and exploitation; child marriage).

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- The role of SSW in school as the designated child protection / safeguarding officer for a school, implementing school safeguarding policies (including criteria for making referrals outside the school to specialist services), and in doing so linking with and performing child protection initial recording and referral functions, that may also include initial assessment, as part of the wider child protection system, while also linking with child and adolescent mental health services.
- The school hub model, where community members access via the school a wide range of social services, with SSW on the school site offering advice and support on issues including access to cash transfers, addressing family health and relationship issues, housing issues, employment and training – either just for the families of students, or for all community members. This could involve either one social service worker on site, or a whole district social services, with the advantage of use of the building, utilities and other resources, at an accessible, non-stigmatising location (which may not be possible, or more costly to resource, in a separate social welfare facility).
- How can SSW in schools also address issues related to pre-school children, or children dropped out of or excluded from school?
- School clusters – could one social service worker or SSW team located in one school also serve a cluster of nearby schools (primary and secondary), and thus a wider geographical area, and wider age range of children?
- To what extent are decisions on how many social service workers to deploy and in what ways, in schools, are based on a set of agreed criteria, including government estimates of current and optimal workforce ratios (number of children: number of SSW), plus area risk assessments, and availability of suitable, accessible services to address those risks?
- Linking SSW with schools – is this a good alternative to locating the SSW in a school, as it would make available to a school or small cluster of schools one specific social service worker, who visits regularly, and works from there on certain days of the week, while retaining the benefit of being part of a district team where they are managed and supervised? By contrast, single SSW in schools could suffer from isolation and lack of supervision and professional peer support.
- Who manages SSW in schools, and do they receive regular supervision, in line with their qualification and specialism (so not just oversight by the headteacher, but professional supervision by a senior specialist of the same profession as them)?
- Which models suit different types of school: primary v. secondary, state v. private / non-profit? Are there any special considerations in relation to type of school, as to which model is most suitable?
- What pressures or challenges might SSW face in a private or independent school, especially if employed by the school, to not bring certain issues that might be seen as risking damage to the school's reputation to the attention of the appropriate authorities?
- In different countries, how is the deployment of SSW in schools currently regulated in education and social welfare laws and policies, including in the national definition and action plan for SSW strengthening? What are the specifications for the role (qualifications and experience)? Are these roles licensed or registered, if so how?
- How is the deployment of SSW in schools planned (in terms of number and ratios), then costed and budgeted, and in which budget (education or social welfare?), and what are the pros and cons of SSW being funded by education v social welfare budgets?
- Any good practice models of cross-sectoral coordination, on deployment of SSW in schools, at national, regional and local level?

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- Any examples of deploying SSW in schools in humanitarian context? (To be highlighted in one paragraph, comparing and contrasting how the deployment and use of the SSW in schools differs in humanitarian v. development contexts).
- How can good practice models, in relation to the above issues, be adapted from high to low resources settings?

Timeline and Deliverables

The Alliance Director will supervise and support the consultant throughout this process, and ensure ongoing consultation with key UNICEF staff in collecting materials to review and commenting on drafts. The key steps will be:

1. Undertake secondary research and a desk review of available models, resources, and research related to the role, deployment and management of SSW in Ending Violence in Schools.
2. Identify and develop 4 - 6 (one or two page) case studies, to illustrate effective models and promising practice, covering both low, middle and high resource settings, illustrating different approaches to addressing the key issues listed above.
3. Prepare the first draft of the technical note, including the country case studies, and recommendations.
4. Based on feedback, finalize the technical note.

ESTIMATED WORKING DAYS: 12 – 16 days – applicants are invited to propose the days required.

Proposed structure of Technical Note

- Executive summary (2 pages)
- Findings from literature on available models, resources, and research related to the role of SSW in child protection in Schools (8- 10 pages)
- Case studies: (5 – 6 pages)
- Recommendations on how to enhance the role of the SSW on child protection in schools (3 pages)
- Annexes

Location: This is a remote consultancy and may take place in any location, providing there is reliable communication to conduct online or telephone interviews and communicate with Alliance staff (based in US and Central Asia).

Travel: This consultancy will require no travel nor receive any support for travel expenses, as interviews and any presentations will be online.

Period of Performance – Compensation

The consultancy is estimated to be completed during May and June, 2021. This will be a Performance Based Contract, with one payment, based on satisfactory submission of the final deliverable.

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Consultant Qualifications

The successful candidate or team will be able to demonstrate skills in the following areas:

- Master's degree in social work, child and youth care work, child welfare, social science, social policy, education, psychology or related field.
- Knowledge of social service workforce strengthening approaches.
- Knowledge of child protection systems and services, with experience working in or researching the social service workforce in school settings.
- Knowledge and demonstrated experience in carrying out literature reviews, key informant interviews and developing technical notes and briefing papers, including case studies.
- Demonstrated excellent writing, analytical and research knowledge and skills, including the capacity to seek and find data and sources in a fluid context.
- Fluency in English.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently, and to work within tight timeframes.

Team Contacts

Responsible person	Function	Email
Hugh Salmon	Director Global Social Service Workforce Alliance	contact@socialserviceworkforce.org

Application Process

Interested applicants should apply by April 19, 2021. Applications should be submitted to contact@socialserviceworkforce.org and must include a CV or resume and a professional writing sample similar in nature to this consultancy.

In the subject line of the email, please include the title of this consultancy.

In the body of the email please confirm your availability in May and June for the tasks in this Scope of Work and propose the number of days and total price proposal (in USD\$) to undertake the scope of work above. Applications submitted without the proposed price and days will not be considered.

Organizational Overview

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance is a non-profit network of 2900 members in 143 countries and 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. 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 pursues this by:

- Serving as a convener for an inclusive, representative network of stakeholders including government organizations, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, donor groups,

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professional associations and community practitioners to create a forum for discourse and collective learning.

- Generating knowledge and building the evidence base for effective SSWS by deriving, organizing and disseminating critical evidence-based research, resources, tools, models and best practices
- Building capacity of humanitarian and development actors to implement strategies to strengthen the social service workforce.
- Promoting effective advocacy and stimulating an active network of workforce strengthening advocates through information sharing, collaboration, and networking.

Tides Center acts as the fiscal sponsor of the Alliance and therefore oversees staff contracts or secondments of staff to the Alliance. A 13-member Steering Committee oversees and guides the direction and development of the Alliance and provides support to the Alliance Secretariat. For more information, please visit: www.socialserviceworkforce.org

Tides is an equal opportunity employer. We strongly encourage applications from women, people of color, and bilingual and bicultural individuals, as well as members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. Applicants shall not be discriminated against because of race, religion, sex, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, color, marital status, or medical condition including acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and AIDS-related conditions. Also pursuant to the San Francisco Fair Chance Ordinance, we encourage and will consider for employment qualified applicants with arrest and conviction records.

Reasonable accommodation will be made so that qualified disabled applicants may participate in the application process. Please advise in writing of special needs at the time of application.