

Scope of Work:

International Consultant - Strengthening the Social Service Workforce in Support of Family-based Care

Period of assignment: October 2023 – February 2025

Deadline for application: 18th September 2023

1. Purpose and Background

Even in countries that have adopted laws and policies to reform their care systems to a more family- and community-based approach, millions of children are still growing up in institutional care, or are at risk of being separated for long periods from their families and communities.

The Social Service Workforce (SSW) is critical to reforming care systems and achieving lasting family-based care solutions, but such national level change is currently constrained in many countries as the workforce is understaffed, overworked, demoralised and lacking in the practical guidance and inspiration they need to effectively support children and families.

Workforce motivation, including overall attitude and approach to the work, is crucial for high quality social services, as competency in practice is based on a combination of not only academic and professional knowledge, but also a set of core competencies.¹ While many countries have imparted formal knowledge through training programmes, this has often not been followed up by sustained efforts to develop relevant competencies, including child- and family-centred behaviours, practices and values. So, to ensure children separated from their original family, or at risk of separation, receive or return to high-quality, family- and community-based care, there is a need to strengthen, deepen and sustain the motivation, and the child- and family-centred professional competencies of the SSW.

In the context of care system reform (reducing or ending reliance on residential institutions and transforming systems and services to a family and community based approach), even when social service workers are newly recruited and specially trained for their new roles, or have been redeployed and retrained from positions previously held in residential care institutions to community-based services intended to strengthen families, fieldwork visits, research² and consultations by the [Global Social Service Workforce Alliance](#) consistently show that the workforce often quickly lapses into practices learnt from the previous status quo, involving institutional, punitive or bureaucratic approaches. In doing so, without sustained efforts to provide them with continuous professional development and regular supervision from trained and suitably experienced senior staff, they tend to struggle to develop the core competencies, values and behaviours required for child-centred, family-based solutions.

¹ Professional competency as it applies to the Social Service Workforce is defined for the purpose of this project as the combination of 1. knowledge, 2. practice skills and 3. values & behaviours.

² See a range of GSSWA resources and reports, <https://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/alliance-developed-resources> including Bradford, B (2015) THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN CARE REFORM January, Better Care Network and the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance https://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/system/files/resource/files/The%20Role%20of%20Social%20Service%20Workforce%20Strengthening%20in%20Care%20Reforms_0.pdf

2) Project summary

This project, managed and implemented by the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (GSSWA), in partnership with, and supported by a grant from, the [Martin James Foundation](#) (MJF), will seek to mobilise care-experienced youth, family members and innovative social service workers to share their experiences and knowledge of the care system, and identify both strengths and weaknesses in SSW practice, to help inform the development of a range of training and advocacy tools.

It is proposed that, at national level, the project will be implemented in three countries: Brazil, Uganda and India. This will be confirmed at inception stage and following initial desk-based research. These countries are proposed as being significant and strategic countries, with a track record of care reform and SSW strengthening but significant remaining challenges, one in or each of three main regions in low- and middle- income countries. In each country either GSSWA or MJF has recent experience and contacts with government, NGOs and INGOs, and has identified potential organisation(s) to select as a national partner, including those experienced in strengthening the SSW, and / or supporting and convening care-experienced youth to inform national advocacy efforts in care system reform. This selection will only be made following desk-based assessment and consultation with key stakeholders.

The first stage of the project will be a rapid desk-based assessment, by the consultant, supported by GSSWA and MJF, which will assess existing progress and achievements in preparing and developing the workforce for family-based care, in the context of care system reform, in these three countries, and will consider the potential in each for large-scale impactful and influential change in SSW capacity and investment in the care workforce. Based on these initial findings, the consultant will develop a research proposal to cover the approach to the participatory workshops, and remote support to the national partners that will follow.

In each of the countries one national partner Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and one relevant government agency will be selected to be part of the project. Country visits, attended by the consultant with GSSWA (if possible), will be supported by the national partner CSOs, including convening initial workshops with care-experienced youth, parents and other family caregivers and innovative members of the SSW. The workshops will help participants co-develop methods for participatory assessment of needs, gaps and challenges in the current SSW working in child protection and alternative care.

The consultant with support from GSSWA will then support the national partners to carry out participatory assessments and documentation of this lived experience, including through video making or other creative media, where possible and acceptable, working with local groups of care experienced youth, family members and practitioners.

The collection of this qualitative data, through videos, written testimonies and other creative media documenting lived experience, will enable the consultant and GSSWA to develop a series of training and advocacy tools in each country. Further, at global level, in collaboration with the global SSW for Care Reform Taskforce that GSSWA convenes, the data will help develop technical guidance which can be used in other countries for new staff orientation, pre- and in-service training and group supervision.

The training tools will need to be based on an initial training needs assessment and consultation, in particular with the relevant government agency, to ensure they are clear, practicable and relevant. The tools will help build the practice competencies of the workforce in child-centred practice and prioritisation of family-based care.

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| <i>experience, to inform development of training and advocacy tools (5 days)</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. New training tools developed based on the documented experience of young people and families <i>Led by the consultant, with support from GSSWA director (5 days)</i> | 6 days | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Advocacy tools developed informed by the participatory assessments and documentation of lived experience <i>This work to be led by GSSWA Communications & Advocacy Manager, with support from consultant (2 days)</i> | 3 days | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Training tools and advocacy tools developed during the project disseminated via in person events and various online channels – <i>dissemination by GSSWA, but consultant may be required to give presentation at final webinar (1 day)</i> | 1 day | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 40 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

4) Location & travel

The consultant will mainly work from home, but there is budget and working days set aside for travel to the three countries where the project is being implemented, to conduct the workshops with young people, family members and SSW.

5) Period of Performance – Compensation

The Research Assistant consultancy is estimated to be completed through 35 days of work during the period of **October 2023 until the end of February 2025.**

6) Consultant(s) Qualifications

The successful candidates will be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Master’s degree in social work, child welfare, social science, social policy, public health or related field.
- Knowledge of child protection systems, child care systems and the role and structure in those systems of the social service workforce and of child care system reform efforts.
- Experience of the above in different countries and regions, preferably in Brazil, Uganda and / or India.
- Knowledge and experience of social service workforce strengthening, using competency-based approaches.

- Knowledge and experience in carrying out desk-based literature reviews, and developing and drafting case studies, training and advocacy tools.
- Knowledge and experience in participatory research with young people and / or family members to help them capture, document and share their lived experience through their creative use of media.
- Demonstrated proficiency in research, including the capacity to draw on suitable research methods to search for, collect and collate quantitative and qualitative data and sources.
- Demonstrated proficiency in analysis and writing up of research results.
- Fluency in English. Proficiency in another language in which case studies could be researched, would be an asset, though not essential including Portuguese, Hindi or Bengali.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively independently.

7) Application Process

Interested applicants should apply by **18 September 2023**. Applications should be submitted to contact@socialserviceworkforce.org and must include a CV or resume, and a professional research and writing sample similar in nature to this consultancy. In the subject line of the email, please include the title of the consultancy to which you are applying. In the body of the email please confirm your availability for the days referenced in this Scope of Work and your daily rate. Applications submitted without a proposed budget will not be considered.

8) Organizational Overview

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance is a non-profit network of 3,000 members in 150 countries and works toward a world in which a well-planned, developed and supported social service workforce engages people, structures and organizations to strengthen and build individual, child, family and community well-being and resilience. The mission of the Alliance is to promote and strengthen the social service workforce to provide services when and where they are most needed, alleviate poverty, challenge and reduce discrimination, promote social justice and human rights, and prevent and respond to violence and family separation. To achieve this, the Alliance works to build and channel the political will, actions, resources, and structures necessary for a social service workforce that is knowledgeable, capable, critically reflective, resilient and committed. For more information, please visit: www.socialserviceworkforce.org

Tides Center acts as the fiscal sponsor of the Alliance and oversees staff contracts or secondments of staff to the Alliance. Tides is an equal opportunity employer. We strongly encourage applications from women, people of colour, 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, colour, 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.