Update from the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance

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Social Service Workforce Week 2020: Promoting the Essential Role of the Social Service Workforce

The 7th annual [Social Service Workforce Week](#) will be celebrated **October 26 - 30**. The 2020 theme will highlight the many essential roles of the social service workforce in the lives of individuals, families and communities. COVID-19 has increased attention and recognition for the essential role of this frontline workforce in providing preventative, promotive and responsive services to vulnerable groups to build resilience to respond to shocks and crises. Their work is even more important during this time.

The week will celebrate the workforce's ongoing essential role and include daily blogs, worker profiles and new resources.

- October 26: **During COVID-19 and Beyond, Recognizing the Essential Role of the Social Service Workforce**, blog by Hugh Salmon, Director, Global Social Service Workforce Alliance
- October 27: **Supervision - An essential ingredient in sustaining effective practice**, blog by Dr. Ian Milligan, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, CELCIS, University of Strathclyde
  - Release of the **Guidance Manual on Strengthening Supervision for the Social Service Workforce**, by the Alliance's Interest Group on Supervision

- - Webinar to review the new guidance and presentations on promising practices in strengthening supervision
  - October 28: **A lifetime of lessons: What being a member of the essential workforce transforming children's care has taught me**, blog by Sully Santos de Ucles, Maestral International and Changing the Way We Care
  - October 29: The Essential Role of the Social Service Workforce in Protecting Children, by UNICEF
  - October 30: **Delivering Mental Health and Psychosocial Support - The essential role of the social service workforce**, stories by those supporting refugees and migrants

Save the date for the webinar that will be held on October 27 at 09:00 US Eastern time (13:00 UTC) on the topic of supervision. Keep an eye out for the full webinar agenda and registration information coming next week!

Webinars and Online Courses:

Webinar Recording: Protecting the Social Service Workforce - Best practices including mental health

The Alliance joined OVC Task Force colleagues in presenting during this webinar held on September 2. The webinar included an overview of the daily challenges experienced by social service workers, country-level examples of what has been done to support them, and how implementers can apply these best practices during #COVID19. Download the presentations and view the recording online.

Upcoming Webinar: Inspiring Children's Futures

This webinar will examine the priorities, mechanisms and next steps in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16 for a peaceful, just and inclusive society for all, particularly in light of COVID-19, which has abruptly thrust the rights and well-being of children and families into greater risk around the world. The webinar will be held on **October 12** as part of University of Strathclyde's Centre for Sustainable Development Launch Webinar Series. Register online.

Upcoming Webinar: Electronic Case Management - Streamlining and Optimizing Care for Orphans and Vulnerable Children

The OVC Task Force is planning its next webinar for **October 14** on how electronic case management systems

Welcome New Members

The Alliance network now includes 2,800 members across 143 countries. Welcome to new members in Peru and Chile. Invite a colleague to join.

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(eCMS) can help OVC projects collect and manage data in ways that optimize the care provided to vulnerable children and their families. The webinar will provide an overview of benefits and current use of electronic case management systems (eCMS) in OVC programs, and will introduce the forthcoming USAID-developed OVC Case Management System Key Considerations, a document created to support country teams as they are thinking about developing an electronic case management system to support OVC beneficiaries. It will also be an opportunity to hear country-level examples of how eCMS systems are being developed and applied, and lessons learned to inform the way forward. Register now.

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook to share relevant news and join the conversation.

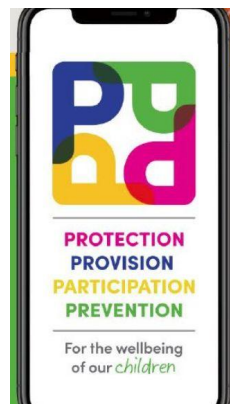### Upcoming Course: COVID-19: Adapting Child Protection Case Management

The next session of the Massive Open Online Course will run from October 12 - November 15. This free, 3-4 hour online course is now available to anyone with a responsibility

Unique free training opportunity on how to implement the plethora of COVID-19 technical notes and improve child protection, by adapting case management. Participate at your own pace – course available for 40 days from 29 June.

for responding to the protection and care of children. It will explore adapting child protection case management services during COVID-19 pandemic. More than 7,000 people have already participated. The course is produced by CELCIS, at the University of Strathclyde, as well as a number of international advisors and contributors, and is available in English, Spanish and Arabic. Register now.

Share Perspectives on Children's Well-being during COVID-19

Practitioners and policymakers are encouraged to share their perspectives and reflections to help inform necessary changes that must occur to protect their wellbeing now and into the future. Through a new app, responses will be anonymously logged over an eight-week period. This data will help to inform decisions affecting the workforce and how they provide for children's well-

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For the wellbeing of our *children*

being. The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance is proud to be a partner of this project spearheaded by Inspiring Children's Futures at the University of Strathclyde. [Download the free app now to participate](#).

Resources

COVID-19 Resources

Visit our website for [COVID-19 resources and tools](#) on topics relevant to the roles of the social service workforce, including mental health and psychosocial support, child protection, case management, alternative care and separated children, gender-based violence, working with communities, communications/key messages and webinars. We are adding new resources to this list daily as more inter-agency work is published. If you would like us to add a resource, [please contact us](#).

[Practitioner Online Library](#)
A new online resource from the Better Care Network, the online library contains practitioner-related resources organized around the components of the care system.
Organizations are invited to submit new tools and resources to the library.

[Rapid Return of Children in Residential Care to Family as a Result of COVID-19: Scope, challenges, and recommendations](#)
As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some governments have mandated that residential care providers rapidly return children and youth to family. Survey data from 67 organizations revealed that rapid return was characterized by compressed timelines that did not allow for adequate child and family assessment and preparation. However, all respondents indicated they believed at least some families would be able to remain intact safely with appropriate support.

[COVID-19: Wellbeing and Self Care Resources for Carers and Practitioners](#)
This briefing explores the importance of self-care for parents and carers, while outlining some 'top-tips' and helpful

resources that can be accessed online. it is important to remember that self-care practices in their varying forms can offer people an important space to focus, process emotions and better cope with the stress of these uncertain times.

[‘When will I be free’: Lessons of COVID-19 for Child Protection in South Africa](#)
COVID-19 has highlighted and amplified structural inequalities; drawing attention to issues of racism, poverty, xenophobia as well as arguably ineffective government policies and procedures. In South Africa, the pandemic and the resultant national lockdown has highlighted the shortcomings in the protection and care of children. Children in alternative care are particularly at risk as a result of disrupted and uncoordinated service delivery.

[Social Welfare Service Workforce Capacity Assessment](#)
As part of the process to strengthen the Ghanaian social welfare workforce, a ‘social welfare workforce capacity assessment was conducted to develop a long-term capacity building strategy for the social welfare service sector in Ghana’ in 2019. The report notes existing gaps and needs and provides recommendations for specific actions to strengthen the workforce.

[COVID-19 Synthesis #4 - Children’s Participation](#)
This evidence synthesis analyses emerging practices and preliminary guidance for engaging children in the response to CP challenges during the various stages of COVID-19 and other infectious disease outbreaks (e.g. Ebola). It explores both barriers and opportunities to the meaningful and authentic participation of children during COVID-19. It includes case studies and recommendations, including how the social service workforce can lead in child participation.

[Guidance for Alternative Care Provision during COVID-19](#)
This document provides practical guidance to social service workers and other actors in humanitarian and development contexts on the adaptations and considerations needed to support children who are either currently in alternative care or are going into an alternative care placement during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also includes key messaging, sample forms and additional resources for carrying out the recommended key actions.

[The Hidden Impact of COVID-19 on Child Protection and Wellbeing](#)
A new child protection thematic report shows the impact of COVID-19 on child protection, including increased incidences of GBV and increased stressors. The report calls for government leaders and decision-makers to increase efforts to protect children from the impacts of COVID-19 by designating the social service workforce as essential workers and providing funding for child protection programming, including for caregiver's mental health and psychosocial support, among other measures.

[Financial Benchmark for Child Protection](#)
Assessing the adequacy of the financial resources available for child protection systems, and the cost of reform of these systems, is a necessary first step to make a sustainable difference to the degree to which this right is realised for children. The purpose of this benchmark is to obtain a comparable measurement of actual expenditure by the state on child protection (CP) across countries, and within countries over time. Benchmarking expenditure across countries in similar circumstances will provide child protection advocates with robust information to analyse the adequacy of expenditure

[Responding to the Shadow Pandemic: Taking stock of gender-based violence risks and responses during COVID-19](#)
This child protection brief details the growing magnitude of child protection and gender-based violence issues resulting from COVID-19. It highlights the essential role of the social service workforce in promotive, preventative and responsive services, and calls on governments to ensure their protection, ability to continue services and recognize their key role.

[Data-informed Recommendations for Services Providers Working with Vulnerable Children and Families during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
Drawing from 87 survey responses from NGOs on how their service provision was affected during COVID-19, data revealed that the pandemic and restrictive measures were associated with increased risk factors for vulnerable children and families, including not having access to vital services. As a result, 10 recommendations are made for service providers working with vulnerable children and families during the

COVID-19 pandemic for public and private service providers
working with this population.

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