GUIDELINES TO STRENGTHEN THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE FOR CHILD PROTECTION

FEBRUARY 2019

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CO	Country office		SP	Strategic Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document		SSW	Social service workforce
GSSWA	Global Social Service Workforce Alliance		SSWS	Social service workforce strengthening
HRIS	Human resources information system		ToC	Theory of change
NGO	Non-governmental organization		UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
PSN	Programme Strategy Note		USAID	United States Agency for International Development
RAM	Results Assessment Module		VAC	Violence against children
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal		WHO	World Health Organization

CONTENTS

Overview of the Guidelines

THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD recognizes every child's right to protection from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, to access justice and to quality care. In accordance with the Convention, states have the primary obligation to ensure that all children are protected and cared for. To meet this obligation, it is imperative for States to establish strong child protection systems to prevent and respond to all child protection risks and concerns.

The adoption of the **Sustainable Development Goals**[a] (SDGs), and, for the first time, specific goals and targets to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against children (VAC)(SDGs 5, 8 and 16), represent an unprecedented opportunity to address violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children. To meet the ambitious SDG Targets for child protection, and ensure that no child is left behind, Goal Area 3 of the UNICEF **Strategic Plan**[b], 2018–2021 seeks to ensure that *"[g]irls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian crisis, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices.*"

These global commitments recognize that violence affects a significant number of children across the world[1] with devastating consequences for their well-being, health and development. VAC places a long-term burden on social services, undermines investment and development across sectors including health, nutrition, early childhood development and education, and constrains economic development. Protection of children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation is thus essential to long-term sustainable growth and development.

UNICEF is the lead United Nations agency on child protection, supporting country, regional and global efforts to protect children from all forms of violence, access justice, and receive quality care through effective child protection systems. A vital element of this system is a strong social services workforce (SSW) with a clear mandate to protect children. A well-planned, trained and supported social service workforce (SSW) plays a critical role in identifying, preventing and managing risks, and responding to situations of vulnerability and harm. Social services workforce strengthening (SSWS) is a programme priority for UNICEF and is key to achieving Goal 3 of UNICEF's Strategic Plan.[2]

The *Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection 2018 (the Guidelines)*, developed in consultation with UNICEF Headquarters and regional offices and the **Global Social Service Workforce Alliance**[c] (GSSWA), are informed by evidence of *'what works'* and lessons learned in the field. They are designed to accelerate UNICEF regional and country offices' programming on social service workforce strengthening, and support work to better plan, develop and support the social services workforce with national and regional partners.

The *Guidelines* are intended to complement the *Programme Guidance on Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Children and Adolescents* (Programme Guidance on VAC), recognizing that a qualified social service workforce, paid and unpaid, government and non-governmental professionals and para-professionals are often the first line of response for children and families and the most important *element* of a well-functioning child protection system.

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1   A 2016 global meta-analysis estimated that over 1 billion boys and girls aged 2–17 had experienced moderate or severe physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse during 2014 (Hillis, Susan, et al., 'Global Prevalence of Past-year Violence against Children: A systematic review and minimum estimates', Pediatrics, vol. 137, no. 3, 2016, pp. e2015407).

2   According to the 2015 evaluation of UNICEF's Strategies and Programmes to address VAC, the SSW remains one of the weakest components of national child protection systems, and recommended that workforce strengthening become a priority for UNICEF.

UNICEF regional and country offices are urged to invest in strengthening the social service workforce. Not only will investment in this area contribute to the achievement of the SDG targets and Goal 3 of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, but more fundamentally, it will significantly enhance the capacity of child protection systems to better protect children. No system can function effectively without the individuals who make that system come to life.

> ➡ **UNICEF has collaborated with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international partners to develop a cohesive technical package, INSPIRE: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children, which promotes seven evidence-based strategies for preventing and responding to VAC. By investing in social service workforce strengthening (SSWS), a key intervention for enhancing response and support services, UNICEF will make a significant contribution to this global movement. A Handbook for INSPIRE was launched to guide implementation of programmes to address VAC and will be used with an Indicator Compendium to track and monitor the progress made in ending VAC.**

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Why Invest in Social Service Workforce Strengthening?

THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE plays a central role in supporting children and families in communities by alleviating poverty, identifying and managing risks, and facilitating access to and delivery of social services to enhance child and family well-being. A well-developed social service workforce is also key to promoting social justice, reducing discrimination, challenging and changing harmful behaviours and social norms, and preventing and responding to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation and family separation.

Investing in the social service workforce will yield high returns for child protection. Dedicated and qualified human resources in child protection are essential to coordinating efforts and resources and providing a system of support for children and families across all sectors, including social protection, justice, health, education, security and disaster risk management. Lack of investment in the social service workforce will undermine all other efforts to strengthen the child protection system in a sustainable manner, including enforcement and implementation of policies and laws, operability and effectiveness of case management systems, and service delivery. A key lesson learned from the implementation of **UNICEF's Strategic Plan, 2014–2017**[d] is that a trained social service workforce that is in contact with families and communities is vital to child protection.

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Purpose and scope of the Guidelines

THE GUIDELINES OUTLINE recommended strategies and interventions to **strengthen the social service workforce** to strengthen child protection systems by:

- increasing the understanding of the role and function of the social service workforce within the child protection system;

- increasing the understanding of the composition of the workforce and the key actors that constitute the workforce

- recommending evidence-based strategies and interventions for strengthening the social service workforce in the short, medium and long term;

- highlighting the specific role that UNICEF can play in strengthening the social service workforce at the regional and national levels;

- strengthening country-level, regional and global monitoring for measuring progress on strengthening the social service workforce, and its impact on child protection prevention and response services.

The Guidelines focus on three key aspects of social service workforce strengthening:

- **planning the social service workforce**

- **developing the social service workforce**

- **supporting the social service workforce**

Under each of these areas, the Guidelines highlight a series of interventions that focus on enhancing the capacity of the workforce to deliver **promotive, preventative, and responsive interventions** that support families and children in communities. Additionally, the Guidelines provide examples of how social service workers provide these services by facilitating and coordinating efforts across various sectors.

In addition to using these Guidelines to complement UNICEF's forthcoming Programme Guidance on Violence Against Children, strengthening the social service workforce is also critical to effectively engage on all child protection issues. Children can face multiple protection risks. These risks are usually interlinked, and vulnerability in one area often leads to increased vulnerability in others. Addressing all factors that may pose a risk, such as poverty, family separation, violence, migration, disability and ethnicity, requires a holistic and systemic response to identify, mitigate and manage the risk and to address needs.

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Using and Implementing the Guidelines

THE GUIDELINES PROVIDE strategic and practical guidance on how to strengthen the social service workforce for UNICEF Senior Management, Programme Teams, as well as regional and national partners working in this field. At the country office level, these guidelines are of relevance for those engaged in strengthening the social service workforce across all sectors, especially for child protection programming.

Strengthening the social service workforce is a long-term endeavour. Short-, medium- and long-term results in each country will vary depending on the socio-economic context, current human and financial resources, and political will, as well as the capacities of the workforce. The Guidelines highlight examples from low-, middle- and high-income country contexts in both development and humanitarian/emergency settings, and outline strategies for planning, developing and supporting the workforce. Recognizing that country contexts will vary and that some aspects of workforce strengthening may already be addressed, countries

will have to implement the strategies according to their specific context, bearing in mind that all areas of social service workforce strengthening should be addressed in the short, medium and long term for the social service workforce to be strengthened in a sustainable manner. The guidelines also include a strategic framework for strengthening the social service workforce. Country offices are strongly encouraged to adopt this framework by selecting key indicators for social service workforce strengthening for their Country Programme at the planning and mid-term phases of the programme cycle.[3] Country offices are also encouraged to work with government partners to integrate data collection tools for the results framework indicators into information management systems so that progress on strengthening the workforce and its impact on child protection prevention and response services can be effectively measured and monitored over time.

Several regional and country offices have already initiated important steps such as mapping and assessment of the social service workforce to support national level partners to strengthen the social service workforce for child protection.[4]

For country offices in the development phase of their Country Programme, it is recommended that workforce strengthening be an explicit component of the Programme Strategic Note (PSN), as part of the wider PSN on child protection, and where possible, a stand-alone output for the Child Protection Programme. Additionally, synergies across PSNs (such as the PSNs on Health, Education and ECD) on workforce strengthening help establish a stronger focus on improving the referral capacities of social sectors, thus increasing the capabilities of the social service workers across sectors to provide comprehensive and multisectoral services.

At the regional level, recognizing the regional differences in workforce capacities and therefore the different starting points, UNICEF regional offices are encouraged to build a regional consensus on how the workforce can most effectively be strengthened to achieve child protection related SDG targets by 2030.

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3   See the indicators in the results framework for strengthening the social service workforce for child protection.

4   More information on the work at the regional and country levels is available on p. 17.

Defining the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection

THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE includes a variety of professional and para-professional workers serving the social service system. Just as the medical profession consists of doctors, nurses, physical therapists, and technicians, the social service workforce comprises many cadres of people with various titles, roles and functions, but they all share a common goal – to care, support, promote and empower vulnerable people.

For the purpose of these Guidelines, UNICEF has adopted the definition developed by the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (GSWA).[5]

The GSSWA **defines**[e] **the social service workforce as: paid and unpaid, governmental and non-governmental, professionals and para-professionals, working to ensure the healthy development and well-being of children and families. The social service workforce focuses on preventative, responsive and promotive programmes that support families and children in communities by alleviating poverty, reducing discrimination, facilitating access to services, promoting social justice and preventing and responding to violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and family separation.**

A **para-professional** would typically work next to or support the work of a professional in the same field. A para-professional worker is trained to perform certain functions, but not always legally certified or licensed to practice as a full professional, which in some fields requires college or university degrees or specialized training[6].

Para Social Worker is a supervised para professional staff person or volunteer – often community based – who serves the needs of vulnerable individuals including children and families, particularly where social welfare systems are underdeveloped or severely stretched[7].

Allied workers are workers who carry out social service functions but are associated with other sectors such as education, health or justice. Examples include nurses, lawyers, doctors and teachers, among others. Allied workers perform a myriad of functions that enhance, support or coordinate with those functions carried out by the social service workforce.[8]

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5   The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (GSSWA) is a network of over 1,800 members in 125 countries formed as a result of the Social Service Workforce Strengthening Summit held in 2010.

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6   For further reading on the roles, functions and competencies of para-professionals, see: < https://goo.gl/Jc98cC >

7   Ibid.

8   ibid.

→ ## Social workers are part of a larger social service workforce

The social work profession is part of the broader social services workforce, which, depending on the country contexts, consists of many different actors with different roles, functions, competencies and skills working in child protection. In recent decades, social work has emerged as a leading profession to provide direct social services and has been developed in over 100 countries. The visibility of the social work profession has grown such that, in many countries, many social service workers call themselves 'social workers' in the generic sense, in the absence of an official certification and/or legally recognized training, legal registration and licensing. While social work as a distinct profession is at the core of such efforts, the Guidelines recognize that multiple actors with a varied competencies and qualifications play an important role in child protection.

FIGURE 1. Social service workers provide diverse services

Macro Level
PROMOTIVE SERVICES

COMMUNITIES, SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY
- Awareness raising
- Build/mobilize community partnerships
- Collaborate with children and families
- Work in interdisciplinary networks on policy
- Advocate for expanded services

Mezzo Level
PREVENTATIVE SERVICES

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AT RISK
- Establish early detection mechanisms to identify vulnerable/at-risk children
- Ensure access to basic services
- Parenting education
- Conduct home visiting
- Develop family-based alternative care options
- Support diversion programs

Micro Level
PREVENTATIVE SERVICES
RESPONSE SERVICES

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE, ABUSE, EXPLOITATION
- Case management services
- Reintegration services for children
- Support child friendly justice systems
- Victim protection and support services
- Conduct in-depth mental health and psycho-social assessments
- Provide advanced, trauma-informed rehabilitative counseling services

Role and function of the social service workforce

Within the broader national context, social service workers perform a host of promotive, preventive, response and rehabilitative functions at the macro, mezzo and micro levels, some of which are illustrated in Figure 1.

PROMOTIVE SERVICES

Social service workers who work at the **macro** level oversee the functioning of the social service system. Specifically, members of the workforce secure and manage budget allocations; advocate for and develop policies and programmes; oversee human resources and social service institutions, manage reviews and evaluations of the system; and steer strategic shifts in the way the system is managed. Social service workers can also undertake a range of promotive functions at the **mezzo** level, such as mobilizing entire communities to protect children and facilitating dialogue with community leaders.

PREVENTIVE SERVICES

While responding to children's vulnerabilities is often urgent, prevention is more cost-effective in the long term. Prevention work by the social service workforce is often undertaken at mezzo and micro levels.

At the **mezzo** level, the social service workforce often partners with community-level groups. Much of the work on cultural norms, such as interventions to address gender-based violence, child marriage and female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C) takes place at this level. Mobilizing and partnering with such built-in protective mechanisms at the community level can not only assist individual children, but can also foster participation and leadership while serving as a visible reminder of empowerment to the community.

At the **micro** level, current evidence of the effectiveness of the workforce is most robust around parenting/caregiver support programmes with the explicit goal of preserving the family and preventing family separation. These programmes have shown good results in low- and middle-income countries,

particularly when the programme interventions include food security, income generation, educational access for children, access to health services, sanitation and hygiene, and community participation. Early detection and intervention with children, especially when caregivers demonstrate material or psycho-social difficulties, can often increase the level of their ability to nurture and to prevent separation.

RESPONSE SERVICES

While wide scale promotive, prevention and early direct services are important and effective, it is equally important that quality responses are in place to meet the needs of children who have experienced violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or other forms of harm. At the micro level, the social service workforce provides a host of response services such as psychosocial support, and counselling, and links to other resources (e.g., specialised and therapeutic services) for individual children and families. The workers may be engaged in child and social protection, school or health settings, in institutions, in child justice or in community settings.

⊕ Supporting families to better protect children – an example from South Africa

Initiated in response to the HIV epidemic, which left many children orphaned or vulnerable, **Isibindi**[f] is a community-based programme led by the Department of Social Development (DSD) and coordinated by the national Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW). Delivered by child and youth care workers through home visits, the programme aims at strengthening families and helps to protect children and adolescents from abuse, neglect and violence by promoting their psychosocial well-being and supporting positive caregiving in the most disadvantaged households. The workers also assist families in accessing key services. The child and youth care workers are drawn from unemployed members of the community and receive accredited training.

> ### → Prevention through child-sensitive social protection and cash transfers
>
> The effective implementation of cash transfers and 'cash plus care' programmes supporting children, young people and families often depends on an expansion of the social service workforce. In the cash-plus approach, the workforce's point of access to vulnerable clients is through a cash grant programme. In addition to managing the cash grant, the workforce links the persons or families receiving cash to other care services such as parenting skills, HIV/AIDS education, counselling, psychosocial support and other services.
>
> An example of a cash-plus programme is the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) programme in the Oromia region of **Ethiopia**[9]. The programme tests a model of case management and integrated package of nutrition, health, education and access to complementary social services, and relies on implementation by social workers who are the driving force behind the integrated systems approach. The qualitative midline evaluation, based on findings from five *kebeles* point toward the importance of a systems-approach for improving multiple outcomes of social cash transfers, the need for building capacity among service providers for making such a systems-approach work, and the engagement with other sectors, including agriculture and WASH, to reinforce and sustain positive impacts.

The roles and function of the social service workforce in child protection

Child protection services are essentially multisectoral. The core response systems broadly comprise social welfare, justice, and health sectors, whereas the core systems for prevention are social welfare, justice, and education. In this context, the social service workforce, whose roles and responsibilities concern child protection, comprises a diverse group of workers who, depending on their roles, functions, competencies and skills, work across sectors to protect children.

Social service workers and social welfare: Social service workers in social welfare[9] provide direct services to children, families and communities through a comprehensive case management process, which includes referral, assessment, service planning, family support, follow-up, monitoring, and adjustment of the service plan.

Social service workers and justice: Social service workers in the justice system support children who are in contact with the law as victims, witnesses, offenders, or as other parties to a legal proceeding. The workers provide a wide range of services, including case management, support to investigation, trial and post-judicial follow up, counselling, probation, diversion and alternatives to detention for children.

Social service workers and health: Social service workers in the health system contribute to diagnosis, referrals, medical treatment as well as assessment of the social circumstances of a patient, including family relationships, related challenges and available support mechanisms.

Social service workers and social protection: Social service workers ensure that benefits reach the most vulnerable people and contribute to the alleviation of individual poverty by influencing policies and programme development, managing cash transfer programmes, and linking recipients to other protection services.

Social service workers and education: Social service workers in educational settings are mandated to identify and assess the personal and relationship challenges faced by children. They assist young people as well as their families in resolving such problems and developing resilience, recognize the signs of harm and violence faced by children, and refer them to appropriate services.

Social service workers, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and emergencies: Social service workers are part of the workforce engaged in helping to reduce the risk of disasters, to implement the emergency response, and to support children and families to better recover from emergency situations and crisis.

In several contexts, social service workers perform statutory roles to implement administrative or judicial decisions with regard to children in need of protection. In such instances, these workers, for example, social

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9   The nomenclature is often contextual; in many countries, the government ministries/departments are known as the 'Social Welfare Ministry', the 'Social Development Ministry', or even the 'Social Justice Ministry'. In some countries, a large part of the social services related to child protection is coordinated by the ministries of gender, women and children, and so on.

Think About Who Should Be Involved

1. Identification; client comes to the attention of provider → 2. Initial Screening → 3. No Action Required

8. Case Closed ← 7. Review ← → 4. Assess/Reassess, including eligibility for services and identify needs and strengths

* if there are emergency or safety issues identified, these are immediately responded to i.e., finding a place of safety.

6. Implement ← 5. Case Plan ←

workers, probation officers, case workers and case managers, are conferred with additional authority as well as responsibilities that come with their specific positions. While the specialized skillset of workers may differ depending on the type of functions they regularly perform, the foundational knowledge and core competencies relating to child protection are similar for all social service workers across sectors.

The critical role of social service workers in child protection case management

According to the Global Social Services Workforce Alliance (GSSWA), **case management**[h] is a *process* practised by social service workers that supports or guides the delivery of social service support to vulnerable children and families and other populations in need. The *primary objective* of a child protection case management system is to ensure that clients – children and their families – receive quality protection services in an *organized, efficient and effective* manner, in line with their assessed needs.

The process of case management *relies heavily on human resources, especially social service workers*, who are responsible for implementing the process. A case management worker (or at times, a group of workers) who may be a professional or a para-professional, undertakes key tasks associated with the case management process – from assessment of a child's and family's needs to organizing and coordinating the necessary multisectoral services

for the child and family, as well as monitoring and evaluation of these services. A well-staffed and skilled social service workforce is therefore essential for quality case management of child protection cases and for the facilitation of referrals to services across multiple sectors.

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Strategies for Strengthening the Social Service Workforce

THE DIVERSE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS of social service workers in child protection mean that these workers need to be equipped with an equally diverse set of core and functional competencies and skills.

The strategic framework for planning, developing and supporting the social services workforce presented in these Guidelines is based on the framework initially developed for a workforce strengthening **summit, which was held in South Africa in 2010**[i]. It has since been reviewed, adapted and utilized around the world as a basis for workforce strengthening efforts.

The Strategic Framework for Strengthening Social Service Workforce for Child Protection, as depicted in Figure 2, provides a snapshot of how strategic actions to plan, develop and support the social service workforce can address significant bottlenecks to social services workforce strengthening. While the aim is to be as comprehensive as possible and to provide a logical and sequential strategic framework, it is important to note that the use of any or all the strategies depends largely on the country context and the national capacity. There is no single pathway or a standardized process to developing a strong social service workforce.

Prior to engaging in planning, developing and supporting the social service workforce, country offices should ensure that the following steps have been completed:

- Establish a national leadership group for workforce strengthening

- Involve a diverse group of stakeholders

- Carry out a national workforce assessment and analysis

- Examine the national context and the current national capacity.

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FIGURE 2. A Strategic Framework for Strengthening the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection

Strategic Framework for Strengthening the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection

UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021

Goal Area 3: Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian crisis, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices.

Promotive Work
- Strengthen policies, laws, and budgets for child protection
- Conduct National assessments and programme reviews
- Promote citizen engagement
- Set accountability and ethics frameworks
- Establish standards for services

Preventive Work
- Support at-risk children and their families
- Organize parenting programmes
- Provide gatekeeping to prevent unnecessary family separation
- Provide social protection support, including Cash Plus
- Organize community groups to protect children and promote positive social norms

Response Services
- Provide support and services to VAC, secure justice, and quality care
- Ensure child participation and best interests of the child during interventions
- Undertake assessments for long term therapeutic services, e.g., medical and psychosocial interventions
- Deliver rehabilitative and reintegration services

The social service workforce at the national and subnational levels is well planned, developed, and supported to perform a range of functions to provide a continuum of child protection services

Plan the Social Service Workforce
- Enact policy and legislation for social service work
- Define types, functions, ratios of social service workers (incl. para-professionals)
- Undertake costing and financing for social service work
- Establish regulatory framework for education, accreditation, licensing
- Set human resource policies, and practice and organizational standards

Develop the Social Service Workforce
- Establish multisector collaboration for education and training
- Align education and training to national priorities and standards
- Integrate fieldwork and indigenous knowledge in education and training
- Offer ongoing and continuing opportunities for training and professional development

Support the Social Service Workforce
- Improve recruitment and retention of workers
- Support social service work associations and councils
- Invest in quality supervision of social service workers
- Promote career development and progression
- Invest in promoting the image of social service workers

- Advocate for national leadership

- Support evidence generation and situation analysis

- Promote and facilitate collaboration and coordination

Strategic interventions to address the bottlenecks

Create an Enabling Environment

UNICEF Country Offices can play an important role in advocating for and providing technical support to plan, develop, and support the social service workforce for child protection

Bottlenecks to work-force strengthening the Social Service Workforce
- Absence of normative framework
- Lack of professional standards and codes
- Inadequate resource allocation

- Undefined roles and responsibilities & Poor HR policies
- Inadequate ratios of social service workers to children
- Inadequate standards, provisions for training and certification

- Limited opportunities for career enrichment
- Poor professional image and poor retention rates
- Absence of support structures, coalitions and associations

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Multisectoral Interventions
- Social Protection
- Social Welfare
- Health
- Education
- Justice
- Child Protection

Establishing national leadership

Establishing a national leadership group (NLG) to coordinate and advance social services workforce strengthening in a strategic and well-planned manner is a first critical step. Engaging all key stakeholders at the highest levels from the start will increase ownership of and commitment to the process as well as the likelihood of greater buy-in in regard to funding and supporting implementation of plans.

Building alliances can generate broader support for national leadership groups. Global networks such as the GSSWA or the **International Federation of Social Workers**[j] (IFSW) can play a key role in building and supporting NLGs at the regional and national level. Alliance-building should focus on promoting national networks and professional associations with participation of a wide group of stakeholders while avoiding duplication of efforts through multiple overlapping committees and coalitions.

What can UNICEF offices do?

- **advocate with the government to establish a National Leadership Group to coordinate efforts to strengthen the social service workforce;**

- **advocate for broad, multi-stakeholder participation and representation in the NLG, which includes government, academia, social workers' associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and development partners;**

- **provide technical and financial support for national level seminars and conferences to discuss and advance the agenda of social service workforce strengthening.**

INVOLVING A DIVERSE GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS

The NLG should consist of diverse high-level representatives from relevant ministries in the government, civil society, UNICEF, United Nations agencies, multilateral and bilateral development partners, universities, training institutions, professional associations, alliances and networks of traditional and faith-based organizations, and any other bodies or agencies that are relevant for social service workforce strengthening.

From the government, as a minimum, a core group of ministries responsible for children and families, social welfare, education, health, justice, internal affairs, labour and education should be represented. Ministries of planning, finance and local/subnational governance and decentralization, the ministry of education and other training institutions (critical in educating and developing the workforce) and ministries/authorities responsible for recruitment and deployment of social service workers into civil service should also be engaged in the process as appropriate.

ASSESSING THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES WORKFORCE

To ensure that all strategic decisions of the NLG and plans of action are evidence-based, an assessment of the current social service workforce in the specific country context should be prioritized. Ideally, this assessment should be conducted as part of a broader assessment of the child protection system.

National-level assessments[10] of the current social service workforce should include a review of:

- relevant policies and regulations related to the social service workforce, including statutory frameworks;

- financial and other resources currently dedicated to hiring, employing and training the social service workers;

- the number of social service workers responsible for child protection per 100,000 children, according to type (cadre, governmental and non-governmental, level of education/certification) and vacancy rates;

- standards of education, standards of training related to core and functional skills, and standards of practice;

- certification, registration and/or licensing requirements and practices;

- workers' perceptions of challenges and opportunities, including work environment, supervision, job satisfaction, ongoing professional development, and their recommendations for improvements;

- the presence, role and effectiveness of professional organizations

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10   Such an assessment of the social service workforce provides a baseline of information for the indicators outlined in the Results Framework and identifies priority areas to focus on in strengthening the SSW.

In 2017 and 2018, several UNICEF regional and country offices[11] partnered with the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance to conduct regional and national-level assessments of the social service workforce for child protection. The recommendations of these assessments as well as the process itself feed into national advocacy, strategies and plans to strengthen the social services workforce for child protection.

What can UNICEF offices do?

- Advocate with the NLG/lead ministry and offer technical support to carry out an assessment.

- Provide technical support, especially by drafting terms of references and supporting the setting up of a working group to oversee the assessment.

- Support workforce assessments by identifying an institution that has the expertise to carry them out. These institutions may be a leading national university or a school of social work. Alternatively, an international expert agency such as the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance can support this.

- Ensure engagement and technical assistance through the entire duration of the assessment.

- Influence evidence-based strategic recommendations relating to planning, development and support to the workforce, as well as to enhance investments in workforce strengthening

Any assessment of the social service workforce should fully consider the socio-political and socio-economic landscape of the country in the short, medium and long term as well as current capacities to ensure that all efforts in strengthen the workforce are relevant and responsive to the current country context and needs. This assessment should include a review of national planning documents, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and other assistance and partnership frameworks within the Official Development Assistance (ODA) space, as well as the UNICEF Situation Analysis of Children, Women and Youth.

11   Processes were led by the East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO), the Middle East and North Africa Regional office (MENARO) and the Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA).

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Considering the socio-political and socio-economic landscape of the country while assessing the social service workforce

Economy
■ Low income
■ Lower-middle income
■ Upper-middle income
■ High income

National capacity
Low national capacity
■ Insufficient fiscal resource
■ Low levels of functioning of the government and infrastructure
Medium national capacity
■ Limited fiscal resources
■ Moderate/medium functioning of the government and infrastructure
■ Persisting equity concerns related to population groups
High national capacity
■ Adequate fiscal resources
■ High levels of functioning of the government and infrastructure
■ May have persisting equity concerns related to population groups.
Adapted from the **UNICEF's Strategy for Health (2016–2030)**[k]

Country context
■ Emergency
■ Fragility
■ Political stability
■ Vulnerability to natural disasters

The process of assessing the state of the social services workforce should not be a one-off exercise, but rather a dynamic one. Countries should regularly review their strategic and programming framework to consider the changing landscape in child protection.

Planning the social service workforce calls for flexibility and adaptability

■ **A change in legislative framework:** The work of the child protection workforce is often guided by legal instruments such as laws, rules and regulations. When a legal instrument changes, it might call for a change in the roles and functions of social service workers, and thus changes to their job descriptions, reporting lines, competencies and required training.

■ **A change in the national context:** The sudden onset of emergencies or protracted crises could compel governments and partners to increase the number of social service workers. This would require revisiting the planning assumptions, increasing budget allocations, revising recruitment processes, and so on.

■ **A change in children's vulnerabilities:** A country may have recently developed a robust child protection curriculum for social service workers. However, it may not have included the latest knowledge related to online abuse and exploitation of children or latest developments, such as an increasing number of children on the move. This calls for either the curriculum to be revised, or new modules to be introduced within current training programmes.

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The fact that not *all* child protection services are utilized or needed by *all* children on a regular basis often has a significant impact on government willingness to invest in child protection services overall and the social service workforce more specifically. UNICEF's advocacy efforts should address this challenge by emphasizing the following:

- that human resources, primarily the social service workforce, are a critical component of the child protection system;

- that policymakers should be educated about the importance of the diversity of the workforce and its different roles and functions in child protection;

- that the knowledge and competencies required by child protection workers are diverse and specialized;

- that decentralization has effects on the hiring of social service workers, e.g., the devolution of recruitment processes from national to subnational level calls for enhancing the capacities of recruiting agencies at the subnational level;

- that deployment of social service workers with graduate or higher-level education is challenging, especially in rural areas;

- that there are risks to children associated with vertical and horizontal task shifting.[12]

Strategies for strengthening the social service workforce

The UNICEF Strategic Framework for Strengthening the Social Services Workforce for Child Protection identifies three key strategies for strengthening the social services workforce: **planning, developing** and **supporting** the workforce.

All of these strategies are critical, but need to be considered in light of the country context and based on the outcome of the assessment of the social service workforce. For some governments, focusing on establishing a robust policy and legislative framework will be a priority, while for others, it may be more urgent to expand and train the workforce to meet critical needs on the ground.

Planning the social service workforce

PROMOTING WORKFORCE-SUPPORTIVE POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

A comprehensive and well-defined normative framework is a prerequisite for establishing a social service workforce with clear roles, functions, competencies and skills. Laws and policies may be social service workforce specific or may be embedded into related laws and policies on social protection, child protection, child justice, health, education, or child care reform.

It is essential that policies and laws address the following:

- definitions of the various categories of social service workers;

- establishment of governing and regulatory bodies:

- registration and licensing requirements for social service workers;

- standardization of qualifications and the certification process through national examinations;

- development and enforcement of a code of ethics and professional standards of practice;

- actions for the professional development and continuing education opportunities for workers;

- equal opportunity considerations, working conditions, remunerations, and career progression.[13]

> In Bhutan, the Child Care and Protection Rules and Regulations of (2015) outline the roles and responsibilities for child welfare officers and probation officers, including developing a code of ethics; monitoring; capacity-building; supervision; complaint mechanism and disciplinary action. It also provides a list of minimum qualification criteria for child welfare officers and probation officers.[14]

IDENTIFYING CATEGORIES, ROLES AND REQUIRED NUMBERS OF SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS

A critical component of planning the social service workforce is to identify how many social service

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12 **Vertical Task shifting** allows less trained cadres to perform functions typically performed by workforce with more training and can be helpful in reaching larger numbers. **Horizontal task shifting** allows people with similar levels of training (e.g., bachelor's degrees in allied fields) to work interchangeably in the Social Service Workforce

13 For further information, see the 2016 report of the Legislation and Policies that Support the Social Service Workforce in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, carried out by the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, at <https://goo.gl/9myFU1>

14 State of Social Service Workforce in South Asia, UNICEF ROSA, 2018- https://uni.cf/2SRGmpZ

workers are needed within a specific country context, their roles and functions, and the qualifications and skills associated with them. Policy frameworks should include a short-, medium- and long-term human resource strategy and plan with adequate financial resource allocation to recruit appropriately trained personnel in the required roles and posts.

The composition and strengthening of the workforce will depend on the national capacity, constraints and future needs, as well as on the understanding of the capacity of the workforce. This part of the planning process requires professional human resource planning skills. The public service structures, employment practices, grades and pay scales, and policies such as pension policies need to be understood and considered. The review should also consider the practice of seconding social service workers from one agency to another (e.g. from a department of social welfare to hospitals or schools).

RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS AND PARA-PROFESSIONALS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

In many countries, the professional cadre of social service workers is typically found at the district, provincial, or municipal level, and only cases considered more serious, such as sexual exploitation and abuse and children in conflict with the law, are referred to this level. In such contexts, para-professionals or volunteers serve as the first line of response at the community level, often in tandem with community-based child protection mechanisms. This is especially relevant in a context where professional social workers are not available at the community level to provide direct services to children and families due to lack of human and financial resources. The risk, however, is over-reliance on a less qualified and less costly workforce and consequently poor investments in developing a more qualified and better supervised cadre of the social services workforce.

Volunteers and community-based mechanisms, such as members of child protection committees, also undertake much of the advocacy work in raising awareness and working to change social norms at the community level, which is also an essential role of the workforce.

The role of para-professionals, volunteers and community mechanisms must be considered in policy frameworks and recognized as an official cadre of social service workers requiring guidance and support. They should also be trained, supported, supervised and linked with formal structures.

> ### ➜ What can be done so that para-professionals, volunteers, and community-based actors can be recognized and organized?
>
> - During the initial assessment of the social service workforce, *identify the various types* of volunteers, para-professionals, and community-based actors engaged in child protection work.
> - Define the **roles and functions**[I] that are/can be undertaken by volunteers and other community-based actors, as well as the corresponding competencies needed.[15]
> - Identify and designate mechanisms for *supporting supervision* of volunteers and para-professionals.
> - Ensure that policies, for example, child safeguarding policies such as prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), which are applicable to social service workers, are applied equally to volunteers and other community-based actors.
> - Develop *specialized training/orientation programmes* that help volunteers and community-based actors understand their roles, functions and the codes of ethics.
> - Advocate for action for the *professional development and growth* of volunteers and para- professionals, through educational and job opportunities.

UNICEF offices should strongly advocate for, and be supportive of, efforts to recognize the para-professional social service workers as a formal category of workers who contribute to child protection and provide technical support to establish processes relating to their supervision and professional development.

15   The document **Para Professionals in the Social Service Workforce: Guiding principles, functions and competencies** provides guiding principles for developing programmes and activities related to how para-professionals can be trained, developed, deployed and supported, and a competency framework to provide programme guidance and accountability, and ultimately inform both training and supervision. (correct reference of the document or include the website

The **'do no harm'** principle, originating from the medical field, is now widely acknowledged in the social service sector. The purpose of this principle is to protect the public against poor practices and is defined based on context and purpose. According to **UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action,**[m] the 'do no harm' principle implies that humanitarian action must: (i) avoid exacerbating disparities and should avoid discrimination between affected populations on the basis of the causes of crisis; (ii) avoid creating or exacerbating environmental degradation; (iii) avoid creating or exacerbating conflict and insecurity for affected populations; and (iv) take into account the special needs of the most vulnerable groups of children and women, including internally displaced persons, unaccompanied minors and people with disabilities, and develop relevant, targeted programme interventions. The principle of do no harm is applied equally in all contexts, including non-humanitarian contexts, and is a primary consideration in any child protection response.

In the context of emergencies and humanitarian setting, as well as in low-income countries where resources for social service work are scarce, there may be a tendency to rely on less qualified para-professionals and even volunteers who have not received sufficient training, and who do not possess the necessary competencies and skills to effectively manage and operate highly complex and demanding situations, including acute child protection needs and situation such as trauma. These workers may be exploited in the name of 'community service' and yet may not be held accountable under any regulatory frameworks.

A QUESTION OF NUMBERS – WHAT SHOULD BE THE RATIO OF SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS TO THE CHILD POPULATION?

Understanding the current worker-to-client ratio (in this context, the number of cases of children per worker, depending on the scope of the work, e.g., case management, family visitation and counselling), as well as the nature and magnitude of child protection issues is a prerequisite to determining the required number of social service workers. This is essential to ensuring high quality delivery of services and it is also a key retention strategy, since turnovers are more likely to occur among overstretched workers. Overloading social service

workers with a heavy caseload will have a negative impact on outcomes and the populations served.

Calculating the number of social service workers needed for child protection and the optimum ratios is a complex exercise because a very diverse group of professional and para-professional workers provide [16] a range of services to children, depending on their needs. Additionally, several allied professionals and para-professionals also provide child protection services. Determining the correct ratio for the various cadres of social service workers and the optimum case load is not easy and no standard formula exists.

In the United States of America, while the Case Management Society of America (CMSA) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) were developing a caseload calculator for setting appropriate caseload standards, they concluded that, given so many variables, it was not possible to do so. Nevertheless, elements to consider included the intensity and complexity of cases, the range of services provided, the services available, the distance to travel, worker qualifications, the availability of supportive supervision, the phase of the case management process and access to data tracking.

Research and evidence on the question of ratios in the social service sector have thus far focused almost exclusively on case management services[17]. While case management is widely used, the social service workforce engages in a wide range of services beyond case management. This type of worker-to-client ratio discussion and planning should be held with agency leaders that have considerable knowledge and experience of the local context.

National planning processes, especially those related to allocation of budgets for human resources and approval of government posts, require quantification of the needs. While recognizing that there cannot be a standard, one-size-fits-all approach to the ratio of social service workers to children, it is always useful to know

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16   See: www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=y_q0WefZ_Ho%3D&portalid=0

17   A **five-year review** of the efforts to strengthen social service workforce, undertaken by the GSSWA in 2016, sheds light on the role, importance, and capacities of SSWs required to perform tasks associated with case management. See: http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/system/files/resource/files/The%20State%20of%20the%20Social%20Service%20Workforce%202016%20Report%20-%20A%20Review%20of%20Five%20Years%20of%20Workforce%20Strengthening.pdf

what is required. It is therefore important to develop an investment case for child protection and costing of services when making a proposal to the government.

One way to better define key requirements is to develop a broadly agreed target or aspirational ratio of social service workers per child population in a country; e.g., number of social service workers with responsibility for child protection per 100,000 children, per type or category (cadre; governmental and nongovernmental). A first step is to look at the current number of cases in each of the service provision areas, for example, at the provincial or district/county level.

Governments often prioritize investments in infrastructure and human resources associated with such infrastructure (e.g., construction, maintenance and running expenses related to large residential care facilities). It is important that sound costing is undertaken to maximise the use of often limited resources and to ensure efficient use of available resources, including by shifting and reprioritizing the budget at the national level. Such exercises should also provide solutions and alternatives to addressing human resource gaps in child protection.

> → UNICEF country offices can support governments in conducting national audits of their childcare programmes, such as in the **United Kingdom**[n]. This audit demonstrates how foster care placements are four times more economical than residential care. Evidence such as this can help advocate for reprioritizing investments, and re-directing and utilizing available and often-scarce resources more effectively. It has been proven that greater investment in the social service workforce than in infrastructure is more cost-effective.

ESTABLISH A GOVERNING BODY TO FACILITATE AND REGULATE THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS

The regulation of a social service profession begins with a code of ethics for the relevant professions, a set of educational/training standards, and minimum standards of practice. The standards are complemented by a certifying examination, followed by registration and/or licensing procedures. Designated authorities

such as professional councils, associations and education accrediting bodies are responsible for the facilitation and monitoring of these processes. In countries where social service work is highly developed over time, bodies or councils that oversee accreditation also establish training standards, competencies and indicators to accredit educational programmes and monitor compliance. These functions are more challenging in low- and middle-income countries where professional organizations are not yet established or not viewed as being capable of such self-governing functions. In such contexts, the accreditation of training is often left to each training institution or agency. To fill this gap, it is important that policy documents identify and support such a governing body for each of the major disciplines producing social service workers (independent of, but able to partner with, government, in line with global standards).

Code of ethics and standards of practices – what is the difference?

The **code of ethics** is a set of values and principles that is required to be applied in a profession, as well as a set of behavioural parameters that a practitioner is expected to follow. The values typically include notions of human rights, social justice and client-centred perspectives. The behavioural parameters often include avoiding dual relationships, protecting client confidentiality, and maintaining professionalism. In some countries, only the code of ethics guides practice, but the broad nature of the principles typically contained in the code is insufficient to guide practice; hence, standards are recommended to clearly spell out the minimum set of knowledge and skills needed to exercise a profession.

Standards of practice should contain the minimum set of principles, knowledge and skills that, in practice, social service workers should have. The goal is to increase practice efficacy and protecting both the public and practitioners. Standards are typically drawn at the basic or generalist level and at the advanced or specialized level. While the generalist/basic level may contain standards for more generalized practice such as case management and psycho-social support, the specialized/advanced levels will address more complex practice models such as in-depth psychological assessments, policy or system analysis, and trauma-informed counselling, among others. At the specialized level, there is increasing emphasis on the need to focus on service delivery, rather than on management processes.

REGISTRATION AND LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

In a fully developed scenario, registration and/or licensing is usually the final step of the professional development qualification process, starting with the requisite degree from an accredited institution, followed by an exam. This final step typically takes several hours in a supervised practice setting. In many countries, registration is either automatically equivalent to licensing, or licensing is merely another step without additional requirements beyond the exam.

Registered/licensed professionals are often required to obtain continuing education/training credits to remain current, but this is not always the case. This aspect of policy needs to consider the differential role boundaries of the various cadres within the workforce, including the community-level workers and allied professionals. Opportunities for career growth can be part of a longer-term trajectory for some workers, as can be observed in some countries where credit for experience is applied toward certification and licensing.

🌐 In **South Africa**°, the Social Service Professions Act 110, enacted in 1978, amended in 2009, establishes the South Africa Council for Social Service Professions for registering a range of social service workers defined under the Act. The Act:

allows for establishing training and approving training schools, investigating allegations of unprofessionalism/misconduct, imposing penalties including suspension of registration, promotion of social services nationally, maintaining professional integrity and governing registration of all social service practitioners. Becoming registered and maintaining registration requires payment, application, proof of certification and adherence to a code of ethics. A fine is assessed for a lapse in registration. Also, the Council reviews allegations of unprofessional conduct and has disciplinary powers.

Professionalization of the social service workforce is an important accountability and quality assurance mechanism. Registration (enrolment in a tracking system), certification (evidence of competency in a specific area) and licensing (legal approval to engage in professional practice) are the main pillars. These processes will also contribute to elevate the status of the profession as well as the individual's social status.

NATIONAL QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS

Creating and administering national qualifying exams is a major undertaking, requiring expertise, resources and staff. Working with key ministries and educational/training institutions is critical. Ethical administration, scoring and recording of the examination are challenging, but in almost every country there are procedures for certifying professions such as health professionals or educators.

Legal reform and changes to qualification rules may render many current social service workers legally underqualified. This could result in reducing the availability of social service workers and para-social service workers. Individuals responsible for managing reforms need to take note and carry out reform in stages in a way that strengthens the quality of social services and allow training and accreditation to take place, without inadvertently undermining the system in the short term.

DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL STANDARDS TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Organizational standards, an often-overlooked area, should be addressed in the policy framework for both governmental and civil society organizations providing social services. In many cases, small organizations begin to provide services without having the foundation to deliver and sustain the mission of the organization or the ability to enforce professional acceptable standards and effective self-management as they grow. Some of the minimum requirements for social service organizations may include: clearly defined programmes and service outcomes; client safeguarding policies; documentation and data requirements; regular and sufficient supervision; access to adequate supervision and professional development; information management systems; and monitoring and evaluation capacity.

Child safeguarding and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

In 2016, UNICEF issued a Policy on Conduct Promoting the Protection and Safeguarding of Children for all its staff and non-staff personnel. The Policy reiterates the organization's commitment to and requirement of UNICEF staff and non-staff personnel to uphold the protection and safeguarding of children, highlights conduct that undermines protection and safeguarding of children, and outlines reporting, whistle-blower protection and investigation mechanisms. UNICEF staff can access this policy here.

COSTING AND BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

Investing in social services requires substantial financial and human resources. Effective planning requires realistic estimation of staff salaries, itemized by social service cadres as well as standardized and incentivizing salary scales. The highest costs are those related to training and investment in the quality of the workforce, delivering direct and specialized services, supervision, communication and transportation needs. This includes the costs of operating field placements or practice, a key training feature for social work students.

Cost-sharing of social service budget through Inter-ministerial cooperation

Inter-ministerial cooperation and cost-sharing can help fund the salaries as well as the costs incurred for training and capacity development of the social service workforce. The most obvious multisectoral opportunities for the workforce are found in the social service workforce and Social Protection, Education, Health and Justice sectors, where a multitude of vulnerabilities of children could be addressed, across the entire spectrum of promotive, preventative, response services. In Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare is the fiscal and administrative lead, while the health, justice and education sectors have the human resources to provide the services. Lessons can be learned from the health sector, for example, calculating the wages of health workers using the Heckman Ordinary Least Squares (OLS).

ANALYSING THE EFFECTS OF DECENTRALIZATION AND URBAN/RURAL DISPARITY IN HIRING AND BUDGETING

Political decentralization and fiscal realignment of government funds, where local governments are expected to finance a greater portion of the cost of government, including the provision of social services, can greatly affect hiring practices. Lower-level government officials unfamiliar with workforce funding may divert funds to other programmes or leave them unspent. Trained professionals generally wish to live in urban areas because of the lifestyle and are reluctant to move to remote and/or rural communities. Ethiopia has sought to overcome such challenges by nominating equal numbers of trainees from the provincial level to receive professional social work training, with the commitment to be deployed in their communities for a minimum number of years.

ANALYSING THE NEED FOR AND MECHANISMS FOR TASK SHIFTING

Vertical or horizontal task shifting is a method that many low- and middle-income countries consider as a way of stretching their scarce human resources while trying to meet service needs.

- **Vertical task shifting** allows less trained cadres to perform functions typically performed by the workforce with more training and can be helpful in reaching larger numbers. However, leadership and effective supervision are needed in defining the training requirements, the roles and the responsibilities of the different cadres and their coordination pathways.

- **Horizontal task shifting** allows people with similar levels of training (e.g. bachelor's degrees in allied fields) to work interchangeably in the Social Service Workforce. While this provides some flexibility in service provision, some caution is necessary due to the varying nature of training.

UTILIZING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and data management systems are essential in planning the workforce and in the delivery of services. However, there are common barriers such as: the lack of IT infrastructure, an inadequate legislative mandate, security and privacy concerns, a

lack of IT skills among staff as well as high operational costs. Some low-income countries, such as Malawi and Rwanda, are using SMS messaging for data and even supervision of community child protection workers, and other countries are planning to make use of cell phone data collection and transmission technologies. In addition to Malawi, other countries such as the United Republic of Tanzania have tested models of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) to track employment of para-social workers.

Management information systems for case management such as UNICEF Primero[18] are increasingly common, and baselines developed for the Strategic Plan have shown that there are over 60 countries with these systems. There is a new demand for developing systems that allow social service workers to hand over cases when the child moves from one jurisdiction to another as well as share information across agencies, whether inter- or intra-country.

Supervision and support of frontline workers through Information Management:

Primero is a next-generation software application for protecting women and children, which has intuitive digital forms and clear workflows documenting case management processes. Since going live in 2015, Primero has been implemented in 15 countries, utilized in complex emergencies such as the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone (managing 15,000 children's cases). After the Ebola crisis was , the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) adopted Primero as the national social welfare data platform. Also, in response to the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan, Primero was used to manage more than 10,000 children's cases, and was eventually adopted by the National Council of Family Affairs (NCFA) to serve as the national data system for tracking violence and service provision. More recently, Primero has been rolled out with the support of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) in Lebanon to assist with a mixed caseload of national children and refugee children as a part of a process of national systems strengthening. Primero is currently being rolled out at scale in Indonesia, Bangladesh and Burkina Faso. Its functionality bridges the humanitarian to development divide, positioning the tool for continued use well beyond initial crises and promoting sustainable, systemic change.

18   Primero is an open source software platform that helps humanitarian and development workers manage protection-related data with tools that facilitate case management, incident monitoring and family tracing and reunification.

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Developing the Social Service Workforce

ESTABLISH MULTISECTORAL COORDINATION STRUCTURES FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Promoting collaboration and coordination among the multiple actors involved in the development of the social service workforce is key to the effective development of standards and curricula, and to identifying roles and responsibilities of various actors. Lack of information-sharing and coordination often leads to duplication of training efforts, resulting in multiple curricula and training programmes for similar areas of work and similar functions of workforce members, and in poor standardization and quality control of programmes.

Multisectoral coordination for developing the social service workforce

In **Uganda**, the **Practice-Oriented Professional Certificate Course in Child Protection** is designed to impart foundational skills and knowledge to working professionals, community development officers, para-social workers, and community-based caregivers who may not have attended any previous child protection training but have a related work experience.

The development of the curriculum and related training materials represents a collaborative effort between the Government of Uganda, UNICEF, academic institutions and civil society. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development has adopted this curriculum as the national child protection training standard, and participating universities integrated it into child protection courses as part of their degree programmes. The Columbia University Group for Children in Adversity provided technical reviews of the curriculum, and the initiative was funded by Oak Foundation and UNICEF. Social service workers who complete this in-service training receive a certificate from Makerere University, which is accredited by the National Council for Higher Education. Entry-level students undertaking a social work degree at Makerere University can take the child protection course unit in their third year as an elective. Offering the course in various forms through universities helps to ensure its sustainability and provides recognition to students completing the course.

education and training, developed by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), can be used to align training and curriculum standards with international standards.

PROVIDING COMPETENCE-BASED TRAINING

Competencies attached to the cadres and training relevant to those competencies are key factors in developing the workforce. In most countries, a bachelor-degree (four years of university training) would be considered the central reference point, with cadres falling below and above, depending on training and experience. This central point may be referred to as generalist social service workforce position, where most practitioners would be providing direct services to clients; and then there could be para-professional or community-based cadres, and those in various specialties, such as mental health specialists or policy analysts, researchers and administrators.

The use of volunteers and para-professionals addresses a larger gap in proficiency, accountability and career development. Indeed, to an increasing extent, countries have come to rely on large numbers of community-based workers. Caution is necessary to ensure that they are well trained and that there is an accountability mechanism for quality assurance that is based on agreed competencies for which workers are adequately trained.

Social service workforce educators should also have competency standards, and their performance should be periodically assessed against these standards.

ALIGNING TRAINING AND EDUCATION WITH NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL STANDARDS

As governments undergo social service system reform, it is important to align training of the workforce with national priorities while creating greater synergy with international and regional policies, social service training standards, evidence and local/indigenous values and knowledge.

If there are no national standards for training the social service workforce, **global standards**[p] for social work

Cultural competency[q] has been shown to produce four times more effective results than generic approaches. A skilled social service worker is adept at navigating his or her own cultural biases and the social norms of the community to facilitate constructive dialogue around respect for human dignity and human rights, the 'do no harm' principle, self-determination and social justice. Addressing violence requires workers who are passionate about helping others through extremely challenging circumstances; it also requires skills and cultural competence that can only be obtained through training and guided practice.

LOCAL/INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

Many low- and middle- income countries use textbooks and teaching methodologies borrowed from the high-income countries without culturally appropriate modifications.[19] Cultural competence and the incorporation of local knowledge are part of the effort to contextualize educational and training curricula to build locally relevant, locally owned and a sustainable social service workforce. Contextualization must consider the prevalent social issues that arise from the historical, political, religious, cultural and environmental realities of the country or region. For example, countries dealing with conflict or the intergenerational impact of genocide will need to tailor the training to address these issues and dynamics. Importing curricula from Euro-American systems of social work education without adaptation to the local context can seriously undermine efforts to establish a sustainable workforce.

> → The Develop-A-Curriculum **(DACUM)**[r] method, where local experts provide input for the required knowledge, skills, tools and work-related behaviours of the practitioners, may be useful in blending Western and indigenous knowledge.

MAKING FIELD PRACTICUM A MANDATORY PART OF FORMAL TRAINING

Field training (or a practicum or an internship) is the signature pedagogy in developing the social service workforce. Field experience must link theory to practice, help the social service workers master relevant skills under the supervision of an experienced practitioner, and produce personal growth. The scarcity of agencies and qualified supervisors pose the most serious challenge to implementing this style of training, which requires a concerted effort of promotion and collaboration by the government as well as academia and training institutions. Student field placements with civil society organizations help to form mutually beneficial university-NGO partnerships that can also support contextualization of the curriculum and the transfer of research into practice.

ENSURING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Policy frameworks and the process of developing the social service workforce should follow explicit guidance on equal opportunity in employment, including: gender balance and equity in the workforce; inclusion and accommodation of workers with disabilities; prohibition of sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination at the workplace; equitable pay; and upward mobility opportunities. These considerations should link with larger policies addressing admission to institutions and training programmes, workforce environment, and hiring and promotion policies.

Gender roles are an important consideration in various areas of social service work. Prevailing stereotypes regarding the male/female divide in working with specific groups of people should be challenged, since they can affect those who enter workforce training.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

In-service training incentives and continuing educational opportunities nurture motivation and expand the knowledge and skills of members of the workforce. Many countries require a minimum number of continuing education hours/days as a condition of retaining licensing or registration. Educational institutions, government and NGO agencies provide these training opportunities, at times for in-house staff but more often to others. Professional development opportunities should also be available to training providers. It is important to focus on strengthening teaching methods and delivery of training. What will qualify as a continuing education opportunity, and who will track these continuing education credits and monitor licensing status may vary from country to country.

Technological advances and improving worker access to the internet can help in making continuing education available and more accessible to the workforce. Online courses such as the Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC) can be utilized to promote and ensure continuing education of the workforce.

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19   Challenges facing social work education in Africa, Mwansa, 2010; https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2793275/#R33

→ The Massive Online Open Course of **Alternative Care**[s] is designed for child protection workers, social workers, health and medical workers, among others, and offers a host of modules related to alternative care for children, with an emphasis on the implementation of the 2009 Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

North-South and South-South partnerships between academic institutions and service agencies are a common practice to develop knowledge and skills of training providers. However, care must be taken to ensure that the country where the work is being carried out has the leading role in defining what is appropriate to their local context and needs, and that the partner country is not simply exporting its own knowledge and values.

The role of partnerships to strengthen the social service workforce

The partnership between the University of Washington (U-W), United States of America, and the Royal University of Phnom Pehn, Cambodia: The Cambodian faculty were sponsored to pursue Masters of Social Work (MSW) degrees at U-W and then returned to Cambodia to administer and teach in the Bachelor's Social Work Degree (BSW), in the local language and with adaptations for the Khmer culture.[20]

The Twinning Center model,[21] which formed training partnerships between South and North countries and encouraged South-to-South collaboration in the United Republic of Tanzania, Ethiopia and Nigeria, demonstrated that training para-social workers can be highly impactful in rapidly increasing the numbers of volunteer social service workers. In these arrangements, challenges include ongoing funding issues and the dynamics of the power differential in the North-South partnerships.

LEARNING THROUGH SHARING EXPERIENCE

Countries can benefit from the experience of several countries who have invested significantly in developing their social service workforce. A **2015 Working Paper on the Role of Social Service Workforce Development in Care reform**[t] provides case studies from Moldova, Indonesia and Rwanda to illustrate how investing in the planning, development and strengthening of the social service workforce has contributed to the childcare reform agenda.

UNICEF can support the education and training of the social service workforce through:

- **the standardization** of curricula, quality assurance, and limiting the duplication of capacity development efforts;

- **the alignment** of programmes with global standards through international collaboration;

- **the promotion** of the appropriate and effective use of local and indigenous knowledge and skills while ensuring commonly adopted standards and codes of conduct;

- **improvement** in teaching standards by developing and implementing joint teacher education programmes;

- **the bridging** of gaps between training and practice, by streamlining field placements for social service students as well as campus placements of graduates in employing agencies;

- **synergy** in job descriptions and scope of work across agencies/departments for similar types of functions, resulting in multiple benefits for children through uniform responses;

- **opportunities** created for workers for mobility through lateral movements and promotions across departments and agencies;

- **equitable** human resource policies to ensure pay parity, gender parity, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of authority, legal aid, mobility, etc.;

- **opportunities** provided for staff development (for workers and trainers) through advanced and continuing education programmes.

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20   More information, see: <https://socialwork.uw.edu/programs/global-reach/rupp-mission-goals>

21   Guyer, L., Singleton, D., & Linsk, N. (2012). Situational analysis of the Twinning Center Para-Social Worker Training Program in Tanzania, Ethiopia and Nigeria. USAID & Capacity Plus.

Supporting the Social Service Workforce

It is common knowledge that, especially in developing and under-resourced countries, there are high stress levels among the social service workforce. A multitude of factors play a role in creating this tension, such as: low pay scales; a lack of work recognition; low job satisfaction; and a lack of job security. To increase the incentive to join the social service workforce and to maintain stability in its numbers and quality, systematic and ongoing support mechanisms are important.

INCREASING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

Planning and developing the workforce are important steps, but if there are no jobs, few qualified candidates will enter and remain in the social services field. This is especially true in the government sector, which is perceived to be a stable and therefore attractive career path.

Some recruitment practices and required qualifications can encourage a career in social services while also contributing to providing better recognition and profile to the professional field of education and training. In many countries, vacancies in the child welfare service sector are preferably filled with social work-trained applicants rather than applicants with other unrelated qualifications. Similarly, probation officers working with children and youth are often chosen from law enforcement trained applicants, while early childhood education posts are preferably filled with those with training in child development.

While it is important to create job opportunities for trained and professionally qualified specialists and others, it is equally important that trained and certified para-professionals are provided with job opportunities in line with their training and are offered continuing education and career progression.

UNICEF country offices are well positioned to advocate with the government to reprioritize their investments in the social service workforce. A critical step in this direction is to provide evidence to the government on how changes to financial allocations can have greater impact on children. For instance, diverting investments from building and maintaining large residential care facilities for children towards strengthening the social service workforce for child protection will be more effective and ultimately help to deliver better child protection results.

SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATIONS AND COUNCILS

Workforce strengthening should include **supporting professional associations**[u] because they can play an important role in legitimizing change, supporting dissemination among their members, supporting individual workers, promoting the profession, and advancing sound social policies based on local practice innovations. Other critical roles include: introducing and establishing a code of ethics, professional standards and evidence-based practices; promoting professional development; promoting research; and advocating for contextually driven, evidence-informed policies.

National associations benefit by joining or partnering with international associations to test and apply global codes of ethics and practice standards through a context-specific lens. These collective efforts can be mutually beneficial and lead to innovative ways of thinking at the national and global levels while contributing to a broader learning and evidence base in the field. International associations can help link practitioners through jointly sponsored learning events and advocacy. Several international associations that are currently active in collaborating with national associations include the **International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)**[v] and the **International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)**[w]. The IASSW has regional offices covering European, North America, Latin America, Asia and Pacific and African regions.

STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO SUPPORT THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

There should be clear organizational standards for those engaged in social service provision, including the ability to implement standards of practice and training.

UNICEF country offices can support efforts to develop organizational standards by: partnering with degree-level programmes for increasing student

enrolment; supporting initial or in-service training for faculty members of training institutions; partnering in hosting conferences; supporting leadership retreats; facilitating organizational assessments; and supporting networks among agencies providing similar or complementary services. Small NGOs providing social services tend to hire promising but untrained candidates who work for a lower salary than is required by a professionally trained worker. Whether they are professionals, para-professionals with a more limited set of skills, or volunteers, the emphasis should be on hiring qualified candidates with the appropriate knowledge and skills to deliver services to children and families.

SUPPORTING SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS TO INVEST IN QUALITY SUPERVISION

Investing in quality supervision has strong implications for strengthening the workforce in terms of increased productivity, lower job-related stress and longevity. Supervision requirements should be built into organizational standards and have multiple functions: **administrative, educational and supportive**[x]. A supportive role is one of the most important elements of job satisfaction and can significantly increase retention rates among the **social service workforce**[y]. Supervision should be both regular and 'as needed', and training potential supervisors, both within agencies and as field education mentors, should be a top priority.

Individual, group and peer-supervision models have shown varying results and safety of the supervision environment, focusing on the needs of the supervisee, supervisor's knowledge and leadership skills are central to effective supervision. Supervision can be outsourced if the organization is lacking in quality supervisory capacity, but this may prove challenging since the supervisor will not be present at the agency location, and the agency may be reluctant for the worker to share concerns regarding the worker's organization.

Supervision of Social Service Workers in South Africa

South Africa's supervision framework sets out the ratio of supervisors to workers as 1:10 if supervision is the only key performance area for the supervisor, and 1: 6 if the supervisor has other duties.

South Africa requires supervisors to:

- be registered social workers with the national monitoring entity;

- have a minimum of five years of experience as social workers;

- complete a supervision course presented by an accredited provider recognized by the national monitoring entity;

- have a portfolio of qualifications ready at the work place and be listed in the supervisor database Supervising *'Auxiliary' Workers* (community-level social service workers).[22]

Supervisor qualifications: South Africa mandates supervision for all recognized cadres and levels of the social service workforce, including child and youth care workers. A supervisor must be registered with a minimum of three years of experience and complete a course on supervision, although an auxiliary worker with five or more years of experience may mentor the auxiliary worker.

SETTING CLEAR JOB EXPECTATIONS, TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Attracting and retaining trained and qualified professional and para-professional social service workers require clearly defining the working conditions and salaries in advance to prevent workers from leaving. Evidence shows that many people are interested in working in the social service sector but are discouraged by the low rates of pay and challenging working conditions. In addition to clarifying expectations, policies on salary equity across regions of the country and urban/rural areas, as well as comparative equity against other professions should be considered.

22   Department of Social Development (2012b); Supervision framework for the social work profession in South Africa. Pretoria: Republic of South Africa.

MANAGING WORK STRESS AND PROMOTING RETENTION

Research has shown that most people engaged in social services are largely motivated by the intrinsic and relational rewards of the work. Naturally, those who expect economic rewards are less satisfied; however, even when the pay is relatively good, social service workers tend to be less satisfied than those in the private sector.

> 🌐 In the **Philippines**, the Magna Carta of Social Workers (Republic of the Philippines, 2004) calls for the Government to "promote and improve the social and economic wellbeing of the social workers, their living and working conditions and terms of employment". To this end, the law addresses the right to unionize, merit promotion, and to have security of tenure, hazard allowance, longevity pay and clothing allowance, among other things. Penalties can apply for violation of social workers' rights enumerated in the law.

Managing job-related stress such as burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary trauma and family/work imbalance are also relevant to effectiveness and productivity, as well as job retention. Clear job descriptions, supportive work/family balance, good supervision, self-care and social support can mitigate the negative effects (GSSWA, 2016d). Governments

should promote worker-friendly policies such as sick leave and paid days off for personal health and mental health, family time, parental leave, etc.

What efforts can organizations make to address staff burn-out?

Burnout[23] is an emotional state due to long-term stress, characterized by chronic emotional exhaustion, depleted energy, impaired enthusiasm and motivation to work, diminished work efficiency, a diminished sense of personal accomplishment, and pessimism and cynicism. Organizations should take steps to promote and facilitate access for their staff and volunteers to social support systems through family and friends, and positive coping strategies.

Several resources such as **Caring for Volunteers: A Psychosocial Support Toolkit**[z] of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies provides extensive guidance on how to address staff burnout, and offers tools and ways to provide psychological first aid to volunteers.

PROMOTING THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE?

Promoting the important role of the social service workforce will increase social status and morale, and improve recruitment and performance. In many countries, admission requirements to higher-education programmes in social work are less demanding than for other higher-education programmes, and can contribute to the negative image.[24]

Many governments have conducted positive campaigns to promote the image of the social service workforce. **South Africa's**[aa] promotion of social work as a scarce skill has improved public perception and has drawn people to join the ranks of social work. In **Cambodia**, the **Family Care First project**[ab] supported a campaign to enhance the public image of social service workers by engaging civil society, high school students and government ministries. One of the key aims of the programme is to ensure an increased awareness, understanding and perceived value of social work among high school students, relevant ministry officials, the general public and civil society organizations.

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23   Caring for Volunteers A Psychosocial Support Toolkit, ICRC- http://pscentre.org/wp-content/uploads/volunteers_EN.pdf

24   UNICEF Social Service Workforce Strengthening Strategy to Address Violence Against Children and Other Child Vulnerabilities; 2017 (unpublished)

1. Preparing Social Service Workforce Strengthening

1 Establish a national leadership group for workforce strengthening.
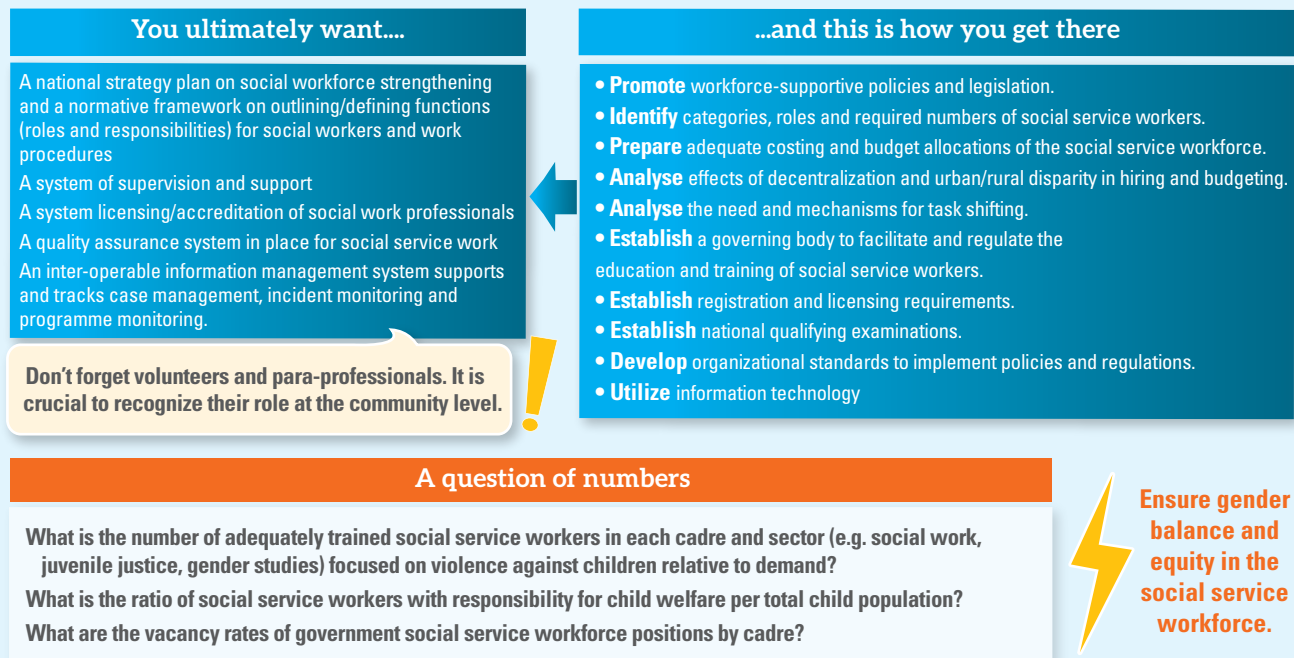
Involve a diverse group of stakeholders. !

2 Carry out a national workforce assessment and analysis.

This will equip the National Leadership Group with recommendations for high-level advocacy. !

3 Examine the national context and the current national capacity.

DETERMINE THE APPROACH TO STRENGTHEN THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE.

2. Planning the Workforce

You ultimately want....

A national strategy plan on social workforce strengthening and a normative framework on outlining/defining functions (roles and responsibilities) for social workers and work procedures

A system of supervision and support

A system licensing/accreditation of social work professionals

A quality assurance system in place for social service work

An inter-operable information management system supports and tracks case management, incident monitoring and programme monitoring.

Don't forget volunteers and para-professionals. It is crucial to recognize their role at the community level. !

...and this is how you get there

- **Promote** workforce-supportive policies and legislation.
- **Identify** categories, roles and required numbers of social service workers.
- **Prepare** adequate costing and budget allocations of the social service workforce.
- **Analyse** effects of decentralization and urban/rural disparity in hiring and budgeting.
- **Analyse** the need and mechanisms for task shifting.
- **Establish** a governing body to facilitate and regulate the education and training of social service workers.
- **Establish** registration and licensing requirements.
- **Establish** national qualifying examinations.
- **Develop** organizational standards to implement policies and regulations.
- **Utilize** information technology

A question of numbers

What is the number of adequately trained social service workers in each cadre and sector (e.g. social work, juvenile justice, gender studies) focused on violence against children relative to demand?

What is the ratio of social service workers with responsibility for child welfare per total child population?

What are the vacancy rates of government social service workforce positions by cadre?

Ensure gender balance and equity in the social service workforce.

3. Developing the Workforce

Training is everything

?

Are the training curricula for the social service workforce on child protection available and applicable for the local context?

What are the qualifications and numerical adequacy of instructors in academia and training institutions?

- Establish multi-sector coordination structures for education and training
- Align training and education with national priorities and international and regional standards
- Align training to job descriptions and scopes of work
- Incorporate local/indigenous knowledge and international best practices in curricula
- Provide competence-based training

Learning by doing

?

Are supervised field placements available for social service workers as part of their training?

What type of professional development is offered to social service workers?

Make field practicum a mandatory part of formal training

Provide adequate professional development and continuing education opportunities

Promote international partnerships

Learn by sharing experience

Ensure equal opportunities!
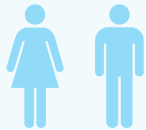
Policy frameworks and the process of developing the social service workforce should follow explicit guidance on equal opportunity in employment, including: gender balance and equity; inclusion and accommodation of workers with disabilities; prohibition of sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination at the workplace; equitable pay and upward mobility opportunities.

4. Supporting the Workforce

Do social service workers feel they are receiving adequate supervision?

Talk to your staff!

Do social service workers believe that there is upward mobility and professional learning experiences on the job?

No?

Support social service organizations to invest in quality supervision.

Strengthen organizational capacity to support the workforce

! BUT...

...also ask yourself!

Is there a professional association that is recognized by the national government as legitimate and approved?

Do social service workers regularly receive training on child protection-related areas?

Do social service workers receive training and regularly use an ICT system?

Support social work associations and councils.

Disseminate professional codes of ethics and licensing regulations for each social welfare workforce cadre.

What else you can do

- Increase recruitment and retention by encouraging the government to create sustainable civil service posts specifically reserved for those trained in social services across sectors.

- Set clear job expectations, terms and conditions.
- Encourage social service organizations to create methods of managing work stress and promoting retention.
- Promote the public image of the social service sector

Results Framework for Measuring Progress

PURPOSE

The results framework provided in these guidelines is aimed at assisting UNICEF country offices in regularly and effectively measuring progress made towards strengthening the social service workforce for child protection. The framework is aligned to the strategic actions for better planning, development and support to the social service workforce. While these areas of intervention are conceptually sequential, it is recognized that the work to plan, develop and support the social service workforce is already well underway in many countries and at various stages. It is therefore recommended that the results framework is updated regularly for all the three broad result areas.

THE INDICATORS

The indicators provided in the results framework will assist in measuring the success of UNICEF's efforts in strengthening the social service workforce for child protection, and directly contribute to the overall achievement of Goal 3 in the UNICEF Strategic Plan (SP). The SP outcome indicator 3.3.b. measures the

reach of a services, including social services, to girls and boys who have experienced violence. Subsequently, at the output level, the availability of social services is measured, focusing the quality of social services, by way of a quality assurance system. Additionally, the availability of social service workers per 100,000 child population, and the availability of social service workers certified in providing child protection services are critical means of measuring social services.

MEASUREMENT CRITERIA FOR INDICATOR 3.A.1. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR SOCIAL SERVICE WORK

The output indicator related to the quality assurance system (3.a.1) uses four criteria to measure the progress achieved. Each of the four components are scored from 1 to 4 based on the stage of development or implementation. A country is assumed to have a quality assurance system in place if the four criteria are fulfilled: (1) a normative framework; (2) a system of supervision and support; (3) a system for licensing or accreditation of social work; and (4) a nation-

> **→ Indicators to Measure Efforts in Social Service Workforce Strengthening**
>
> - **UNICEF SP Outcome Indicator 3.3.b.** Number of girls and boys who have experienced violence reached by health, social services, or justice/law enforcement services
>
> - **UNICEF SP Output Indicator 3.a.1.** Number of countries with a quality assurance system in place for social service work
>
> - **RAM Output Indicator 45** Number of social service workers with responsibility for child protection per 100,000 children
>
> - **Forthcoming VAC Programme Guidance Indicator 3.1(d).1** Number and percentage of social services workers who have been certified to work with child victims, through UNICEF-supported programmes

wide human resource information (HRI) system. The following chart offers an explanation of the four criteria and the scales of measurement.

After scoring each of the four criteria on the above-mentioned scales of one to four, a composite score

for the quality assurance system for social service workforce is arrived at, as follows:
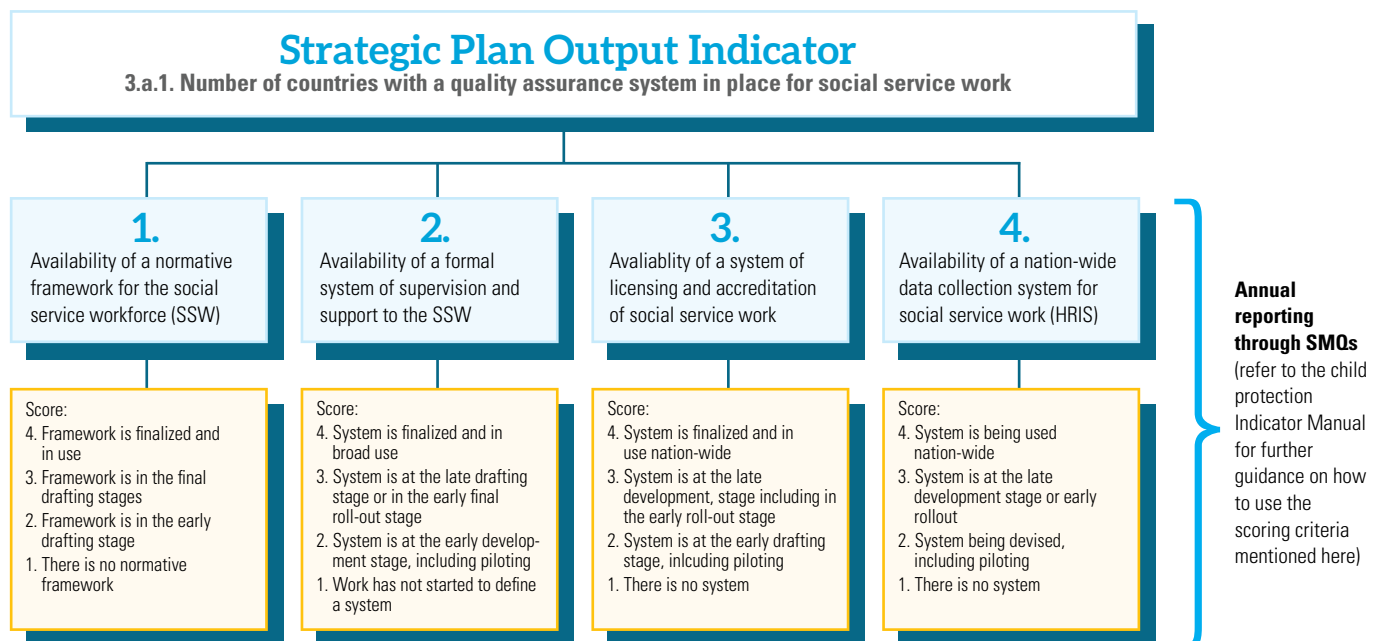
- Score of 13-16: Well developed quality assurance system

- Score of 9-12: Mid-level development of the quality assurance system

- Score of 5-8: Early development of the quality assurance system

- Score of 4: No development in the area of quality assurance system

OPERATIONALIZING THE RESULTS FRAMEWORK

All UNICEF country offices are encouraged to include these indicators in their CPD results matrices and in RAM. The **Child Protection Indicator Manual**[25] for the Strategic Plan provides important definitions and guidance on how to operationalize the framework and the measure results. A number of Strategic Monitoring Questions (SMQs) on UNICEF's Results Assessment Module (RAM) offer simplified ways of reporting on the progress made in achieving results.

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25   Country offices should access the latest version of the Indicator Manual for SP Goal Area 3 on the UNICEF Child Protection SharePoint.

FIGURE 3. Indicator 3.a.1 – measuring criteria the quality assurance system for social service work

Strategic Plan Output Indicator
3.a.1. Number of countries with a quality assurance system in place for social service work

1. Availability of a normative framework for the social service workforce (SSW)

Score:
4. Framework is finalized and in use
3. Framework is in the final drafting stages
2. Framework is in the early drafting stage
1. There is no normative framework

2. Availability of a formal system of supervision and support to the SSW

Score:
4. System is finalized and in broad use
3. System is at the late drafting stage or in the early final roll-out stage
2. System is at the early development stage, including piloting
1. Work has not started to define a system

3. Avaliablity of a system of licensing and accreditation of social service work

Score:
4. System is finalized and in use nation-wide
3. System is at the late development, stage including in the early roll-out stage
2. System is at the early drafting stage, inlcuding piloting
1. There is no system

4. Availability of a nation-wide data collection system for social service work (HRIS)

Score:
4. System is being used nation-wide
3. System is at the late development stage or early rollout
2. System being devised, including piloting
1. There is no system

Annual reporting through SMQs (refer to the child protection Indicator Manual for further guidance on how to use the scoring criteria mentioned here)

TABLE 1. Results Framework for Strengthening the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection

No.	Result Statement and Indicators	Reference	Sources of data
	The social service workforce at the national and subnational levels is well planned, developed, and supported to perform a range of functions to provide a continuum of child protection services		
1	Availability of a quality assurance system for social service work Strategic Plan (SP) Indicator Manual definition: A 'quality assurance system for social service work' includes four criteria: **Criteria 1:** Availability of a normative framework for the social service workforce (SSW) at the national and/or subnational level **Criteria 2:** Availability of a formal system of supervision and support to the SSW **Criteria 3:** Availability of a system for licensing or accreditation of social work **Criteria 4:** Availability of a nation-wide data collection system for SSW human resources information system (HRIS) collection system. **Scaling:** Each of the four components are scored from 1 to 4 based on the stage of development or implementation. See Strategic Plan Indicator Manual for the Strategic Plan Goal Area 3 for definitions and detailed information on each of the criteria and the scoring framework.	UNICEF SP indicator 3.a.1 RAM output indicator Violence against Children (VAC) Programme Guidance Indicator	There are multiple data sources at the country level that relate to normative frameworks, systems of supervision and support, systems for licensing or accreditation of social work, and a nation-wide data collection system. Country offices should specify the relevant sources of data.
2	Number of social service workers with responsibility for child protection per 100,000 children Definition: The SSW is defined as workers, paid and unpaid, governmental and non-governmental, who staff the social service system and contribute to the care, support, promotion of rights and empowerment of vulnerable populations served by the social service system. INSPIRE definition: Number of social service workers who are responsible for delivering child protection (or child welfare) services, expressed as a ratio per 100,000 children. Social service workers include those who provide services or information to beneficiaries related to child protection or child welfare; they may also include those who work with community leaders and organizations to mobilize services for vulnerable populations. Types of social service workers may be recorded by cadre (usually defined at the national level), whether or not they are licensed or certified, by education level (e.g. with or without post-secondary education) and by type of post (governmental vs. non-governmental). Numerator: Number of social workers with responsibility for child protection or child welfare services during the past calendar year Denominator: Total population of children out of the total population divided by 100,000, in the past calendar year.	RAM output indicator 45 VAC Programme Guidance Indicator 4.1.1	Administrative data systems

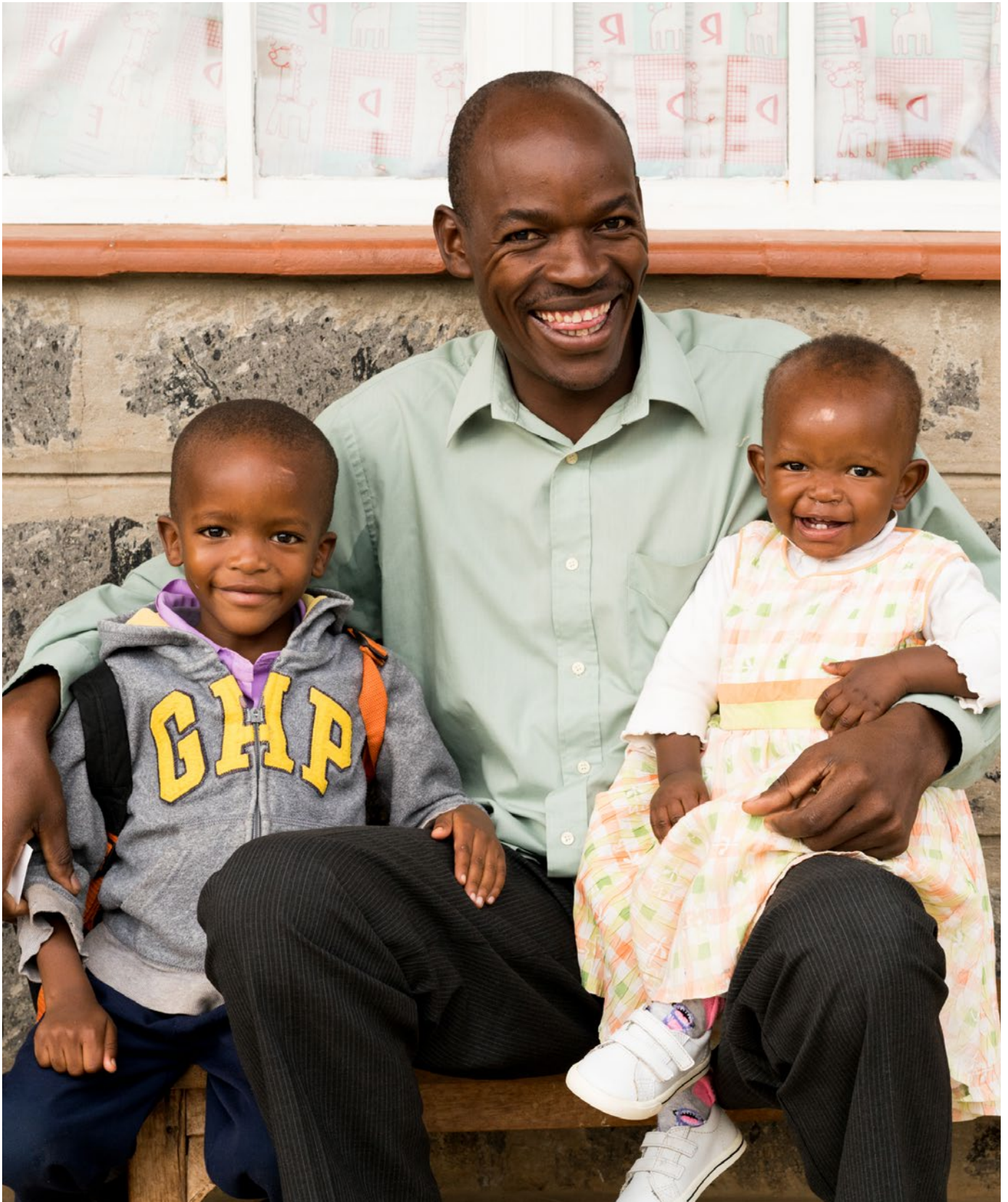| No.	Result Statement and Indicators	Reference	Sources of data
	The social service workforce at the national and subnational levels is well planned, developed, and supported to perform a range of functions to provide a continuum of child protection services		
3	Number and percentage of social services workers who have been certified to work with child victims, through UNICEF-supported programmes Definitions: For social service workers, please refer to definition in Indicator #2 above. Certified: Certified means social services workers who participate in and complete a training programme that is officially recognized by the government and/or provided by a nationally approved training provider. There is no global "standardized" training programme, and training programmes are designed (a) at the national and subnational level and (b) for social service workers who provide varied generic and/or specialized services to child victims and (c) and recognized through a completion certificate endorsed by the government and/or nationally approved training provider. In UNICEF supported programmes, it is essential that UNICEF CO/sub-offices provide technical support towards development of the training programme/package that can be agreed to by various partners at the national level and approved by government. In some instances, UNICEF offices provide financial support towards organization of these programmes. The type of training can vary depending on the categories of social service workers being targeted, some examples of which include: ■ a generic five-day/week-long training on child protection every year; ■ a specialized training on case management for case management workers; ■ a specialized training of mental health and psychosocial support staff/volunteers. *** Although this indicator is aligned to UNICEF Programme Guidance on prevention and response to VAC and to UNICEF's corporate commitments made in the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, country offices are highly encouraged to develop an aggregate indicator as follows:* ***Number and percentage of social services workers who have been certified to provide child protection services through UNICEF-supported programmes*** *The objective of developing the aggregate indicator is to measure the availability of certified social service workers who provide a range of child protection services, including but not limited to victims of VAC. These could include child protection services related to children in contact with law, children in alternative care, harmful social norms, and so on.*	VAC Programme Guidance Indicator 3.1(d).1 Cross- referenced with SP indicator 3.c.2 for Justice	Administrative data systems

Implementation Plan for the Guidelines

UNICEF country office can use the following chart to develop an ambitious but realistic plan to implement the guidelines to strengthen social service workforce for child protection at country level in partnership with key stakeholders.

Priority level	Priority actions	Timeframes	
		2018–2019	2020–2021
High	Prioritize strengthening the social service workforce (SSW) for child protection in country programme documents (CPDs) and annual work plans	X	
High	Ensure that the current/upcoming UNICEF Situation Analysis of Children, Women and Youth includes a section on the SSW for child protection	X	
High	Support the government in establishing a National Leadership Group or a national-level, multisectoral coordination mechanism for workforce strengthening	X	
High	Support the conduct of a national assessment of SSW for Child Protection and development of a National Plan of Action with the National Leadership Group to implement recommendations from the Assessment	X	
High	Support the establishment/strengthening of the normative framework, e.g., policy and legislation	X	
High	Support the definition of the roles, functions, types and number of social service workers	X	
High	Advocate with the government to establish SSW posts as per normative framework and required numbers		X
High	Support the development of costing and financial benchmarks for the SSW	X	
High	Support the establishment of an ongoing functioning of a national-level, multisectoral coordination mechanism mandated with the development of curricula, educational, training and supervision standards for the SSW	X	
High	Support the development of licensing and accreditation systems		X
Medium	Include in CPD/ Results Assessment Module (RAM) indicators related to SSW strengthening that are aligned to the UNICEF Strategic Plan	X	
Medium	Support the establishment of equitable human resource policies for the SSW		X
Medium	Support the establishment and functioning of national- and/or subnational-level associations and councils of SSW affiliated to international associations		X

ENDNOTES

a   http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

b   https://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/SP_presentation_for_new_EB_members.pdf

c   http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/

d   https://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/Lessons_learned_in_SP_implementation-EN-6Jun2016.pdf

e   http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/defining-social-service-workforce

f   https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/SAF_brief_isibindi.pdf

g   http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/system/files/resource/files/Cash-Plus-in_Practice.pdf

h   http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Case-Management-Concepts-and-Principles.pdf

i   http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/investing-those-who-care-children-social-welfare-workforce-strengthening-conference-report

j   https://www.ifsw.org/

k   https://www.unicef.org/health/files/UNICEF_Health_Strategy_Final.pdf

l   http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/para-professionals-social-service-workforce-guiding-principles-functions-and-0

m   https://www.unicef.org/cholera/Chapter_1_intro/05_UNICEF_Core%20Commitments_for_Children_in_Humanitarian_Action.pdf

n   https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Children-in-care1.pdf

o   http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/system/files/resource/files/State%20of%20the%20Social%20Service%20Workforce%202015%20Report%20-%20A%20Multi-Country%20R   eview.pdf

p   https://www.ifsw.org/global-standards/

q   https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2793275/#R33

r   http://www.dacum.org/

s   http://www.alternativecaremooc.com/index.php/en/

t   http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/system/files/resource/files/The%20Role%20of%20Social%20Service%20Workforce%20Strengthening%20in%20Care%20Reforms_0.pdf

u   http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/system/files/resource/files/State%20of%20the%20Social%20Service%20Workforce%202015%20Report%20-%20A%20Multi-Country%20Review.pdf

v   https://www.ifsw.org/

w   https://www.iassw-aiets.org/

x   https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/social-development/supervision_framework_for_the_social_work_profession_in_south_africa_2012.pdf

y   https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/599028

z   http://pscentre.org/wp-content/uploads/volunteers_EN.pdf

aa   http://www.lmip.org.za/sites/default/files/documentfiles/Skills_Shortages_in_South_Africa_-_Entire_eBook_0.pdf

ab   http://familycarefirstcambodia.org/

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