



# Strengthening the Social Service Workforce for Family-Based Care

## Learning from young people with lived experience of care

As the first line of response for many children and families at-risk of separation, a well-developed and supported social service workforce—including social workers, para professionals and community volunteers—plays an essential role in helping countries achieve lasting family-based care solutions. Unfortunately, too often these workers are not appropriately equipped, supported or empowered to effectively support children and families in need. To ensure children separated from their original family, or at risk of separation, receive or return to high-quality family- and community-based care, countries must strengthen, deepen and sustain the motivation and competencies of the social service workforce.

The Strengthening the Social Service Workforce for Family-Based Care project is a two-year project implemented and managed by the [Global Social Service Workforce Alliance](#) with technical support from consultants from [Child Frontiers](#) and supported by a grant from the [Martin James Foundation](#). Implemented in Brazil, India and Uganda, it aims to learn from, record and amplify the knowledge and lived experience of youth and children with lived experience of care, their family members, and of social service workers, to develop a range of training and advocacy tools that will strengthen the social service workforce in support of family-based care.

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Listening to those who have been through the formal care system, helping them tell their story about what kind of help they and their families needed at crucial points in their lives, whether they got that kind of help and who they got it from, will help us identify the kind of social service workforce behaviours and practices that make the biggest difference in helping families stay together.

**Hugh Salmon, Director, Global Social Service Workforce Alliance**

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## Approach

➤ **Desk Review and Inception Report:** We will assess the existing progress and achievements in preparing and developing the workforce for family-based care across the three countries through a desk review.

➤ **Participatory Assessment and Documentation:** We will work with national partners to capture the knowledge and lived experience of children, young people and family members, from their contact with the formal care system—including those with experience in residential care, foster care or formalised kinship care, and those that have left these forms of care to live independently or to be reintegrated back into families. We will then use the learning to determine the needs and gaps in workforce knowledge, attitudes and skills. Where appropriate, we will document the knowledge and experiences through videos, written testimonies and other creative media.

➤ **Development of Training Tools:** We will use insights and creative media from the participatory assessments to develop engaging training tools that will transform the knowledge, attitudes and practices of social service workers so that they are motivated by, and skilled in, prioritizing family-based care over alternative care.

➤ **Development of Advocacy Tools:** We will use insights and creative media from the participatory assessments to develop impactful advocacy tools that will raise awareness of the crucial role of social service workers in helping governments reform their care systems and of the need to increase long-term investment in this essential workforce.

➤ **Implementation of Training and Advocacy Tools:** We will Implement training and advocacy tools in each country and make revisions based on learnings. Once finalized, we will disseminate tools at a global level for use in countries facing similar challenges.