



MARCELA DILLON-STRETCHIE

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Overview of role

I coordinate projects aimed at creating and developing social services for various vulnerable groups, including children at risk. During my nine years of service at Keystone Human Services Moldova, we have contributed to the development of ten social service “mobile teams” for children and adults with disabilities. These services are intended to improve the quality of life of children with disabilities and their families, through access to counseling, recovery and psychosocial rehabilitation services, which helps increase personal autonomy and prevent institutionalization. Currently, I am coordinating a project funded by the European Union, which aims to empower 40 civil society organizations in the social field to develop and implement sustainable social services for vulnerable groups. Within the Changing the Way We Care initiative, I am also coordinating the process of evaluating the system of initial and continuous training of human resources in the field of social assistance.

Tasks and responsibilities

My tasks include providing support and guidance to public and private service providers in order to develop and improve social services; participating in various working groups for the development of a regulatory framework in the field of social work and inclusive education; monitoring and evaluating the quality of social services; providing methodological support to social service providers in the process of accreditation of social services; and providing professional supervision of employees within the services.

Training and education

In 1996, I graduated from the State University of Moldova, specializing in Philosophy. In 2002, I obtained a PhD in Sociological Sciences. My 14 years as a teacher at the Department of Sociology and Social Work of the State University of Moldova has allowed me to develop my professional

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skills in the field of social work. I have taught courses in the field of child and family rights protection to students, contributing to the training of successive generations of social workers in Moldova.

Motivation

I am passionate about my work because it is a dynamic, constantly changing field, which motivates me to develop professionally and personally. Working in social work has allowed me to meet extraordinary people, who work with dedication, and who have inspired me to become who I am today. At the same time, I have a real satisfaction that I can see the results of my work and help solve some problems of children and families at risk, through the creation and development of social services. Respect for human dignity, diversity, the right to non-discrimination, acceptance and

tolerance are part of the reasons why social workers can contribute to social change, and what makes me like and confidently promote this career.

Changing role due to COVID-19

The pandemic has been a major challenge for me and social service providers, but especially for the beneficiaries of social services, which I monitor. The first thing I did was to rethink priorities and how social service providers could continue to communicate with their beneficiaries while also ensuring compliance with COVID-19 prevention and control measures. Secondly, we have allocated more time for professional supervision of employees in the services because the stress level has sharply increased.

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Who is the social service workforce?

While capturing any one definition of the social service workforce is challenging, it can be broadly defined to describe a variety of workers – paid and unpaid, governmental and nongovernmental – who staff the social service system and contribute to the care and well-being of children, youth, adults, older persons, families and communities. Social service workers engage people, structures and organizations to: facilitate access to needed services, alleviate poverty, challenge and reduce discrimination, promote social justice and human rights, and prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and family separation.

What is Social Service Workforce Week?

Every year, the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance hosts Social Service Workforce Week. The week serves as an opportunity for advocates to bring attention to and build support for the social service workforce as well as raise awareness about promising workforce strengthening efforts supported by stakeholders around the world.

Organized around daily themes focused on areas of practice, the week will allow Alliance members and the public to engage in a dynamic platform of information exchange and advocacy through various forms of social media.

What is the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance?

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance works towards a world in which a well-planned, developed and supported social service workforce engages people, structures and organizations to strengthen and build individual, child, family and community well-being and resilience. To achieve this, we work to build and channel the political will, actions, resources and structures necessary for a social service workforce that is knowledgeable, capable, critically reflective, resilient and committed.

The Alliance is an inclusive network of more than 3,000 individual members affiliated with a range of organizations and institutions across 145 countries. The Alliance is currently funded jointly by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), under the Partnerships Plus project implemented by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc., and by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) through projects at global, regional and national level. The Alliance is a fiscally sponsored project of Tides Center, a U.S. registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Learn more

Learn more about Marcela and other social service workers! Join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtag #SSWWeek and online at www.socialserviceworkforce.org/

Improving the workforce. Improving lives.