

THE STATE OF THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE 2015 REPORT

A MULTI-COUNTRY REVIEW



GLOBAL
SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE
ALLIANCE

Improving the workforce. Improving lives.

The Alliance officially launched in June 2013 following a recommendation by participants from 18 countries at a conference funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in 2010. The mission of the Alliance is to promote the knowledge and evidence, resources and tools, and political will and action needed to address key social service workforce challenges, especially within low- to middle-income countries. The Alliance acts as a multi-sectoral convener to share good practices, advance knowledge, and advocate for workforce improvements that will lead to better outcomes for children and families. Individual members of the Alliance currently span 66 countries.

Background

This report sheds light on key social service workforce data and trends in 2014, showcases innovative and effective workforce strengthening initiatives, and highlights the impact of a lack of data in this fairly new area of focus. This first annual report is envisioned as a first step among many other global, regional, and national efforts to better describe, depict, and analyze efforts to strengthen the social service workforce.

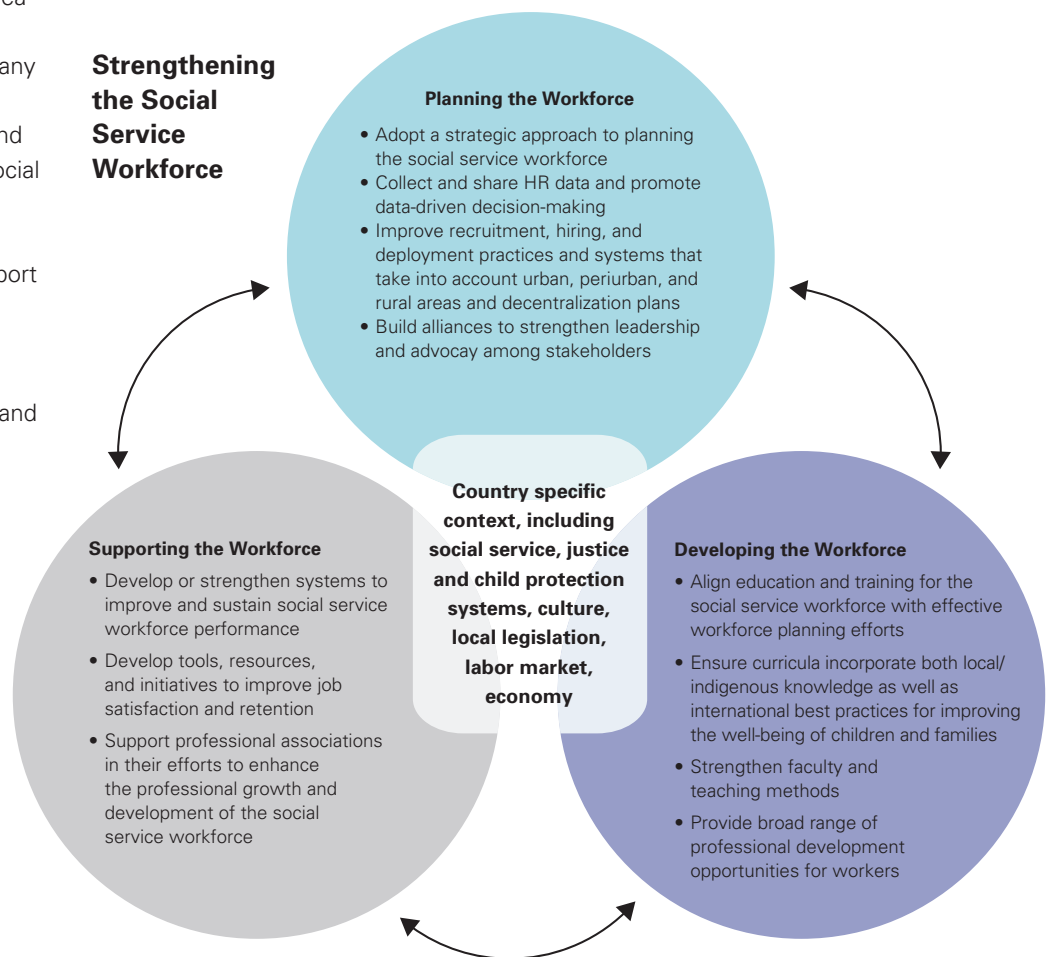
The 15 countries included in the report are: Cambodia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Moldova, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zambia.

The social service workforce is vast, dynamic, and highly context specific

The social service workforce can be broadly defined as a variety of workers—paid and unpaid, professional and paraprofessional, governmental and nongovernmental—who make

the social service system function and contribute to promoting the rights and ensuring the care, support, and protection of vulnerable populations.

Social service workers help to ensure



that effective prevention and support services reach those who need it most. Social service workers reunite families, provide critical psychosocial support, alleviate economic hardship, and help vulnerable individuals to assert their legal rights and protect them from future harm. They also work to address larger social concerns, such as poverty, discrimination, and injustice. A coordinated and collaborative response including well-planned, trained, and supported people creates protective environments that promote the healthy development of children, strong families, and safe communities.

All efforts to strengthen this workforce should be understood in the context of a larger systems framework that links to and reinforces other components of the social service system including legislative and policy environments, leadership and governance structures, coordination and networking

mechanisms with other key sectors and communities, financial systems, and information management services. Workforce strengthening is then seen as one building block among many to establish an effective social service system.

Education and Training

The report reviews three different types of education programs in 13 countries, including degree, diploma and certificate programs, which are designed to meet the needs of workers at different levels of experience, practice, and function.

When identifying degree programs relevant to the social service workforce, most countries identified social work as the primary profession, but several also identified degrees in other areas such as child development. The number of schools offering degree programs varies significantly from

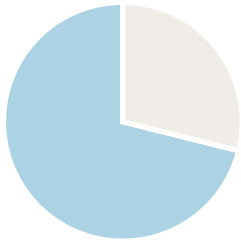
country to country. The programs graduated a total of 8,163 students (7,106 bachelor's degrees, 1,011 master's degrees and 46 doctoral degrees).

The smaller numbers of master's and doctoral degrees may point to potential challenges in preparing adequate numbers of graduates to become faculty. Moreover, the relative scarcity of advanced degree programs creates implications for long-term social service planning. Potentially, this holds serious implications for the quality and scope of advocacy efforts, policy and legislation development, program and strategic planning, training, and fundraising.

The report also reviews the number and length of diploma programs as well as certificate programs, which are typically available to para professionals or community level workers.

Number of Social Service Related Degree Programs in 13 Countries

	Bachelor of Social Work	Master of Social Work	Doctorate in Social Work
Cambodia	2	1	
Ethiopia	1 ¹	1	1
Georgia	2	2	2
Ghana	2	1	1
Indonesia	35	3	2
Kenya	2	1	
Moldova	4	4	1
Nepal	3	3	
South Africa	18	14	6
Tanzania	5	4	
Uganda	3	1	
Vietnam	11	1	
Zambia	8 ²	3	



71%
OF ASSOCIATIONS
REPORTEDLY REQUIRE
MEMBERS TO SIGN A
CODE OF ETHICS.



A 13-year-old meets with a social worker in his home in Kutaisi, Georgia. Thanks to a UNICEF-supported fostering project, he and his sister have recently returned home from an institution in the city.

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Ratios of Government SSW to Population³

Country	Number of Government SSW	Population ⁴	Ratio of Government SSW to Population
Cambodia	560	15,135,169	1 : 27,027
Georgia	330	4,487,200	1 : 13,598
Ghana	1,026 ^{5,6}	25,904,598	1 : 25,248
Indonesia	6,480 ^{7,8,9}	249,865,631	1 : 38,551
Kenya	1,336 ¹⁰	44,353,691	1 : 33,200
Moldova	1,140 ¹¹	3,559,000	1 : 3,122
Myanmar	1,252	53,259,018	1 : 42,539
Nepal	240	27,797,457	1 : 115,800
South Africa	8,692	52,981,991	1 : 6,096
Tanzania	621 ¹²	49,253,126	1 : 79,313
Uganda	1,312	37,578,876	1 : 28,642
Zambia	244 ¹³	14,538,640	1 : 59,584

Government and Nongovernment Workforce

Data gathered on the government workforce helps governments to make evidence-based decisions about deploying workers to the right areas, especially when resources are scarce. It allows for analysis based on worker to population ratios, particularly in areas of high vulnerability, and assesses retention and vacancy rates.

Notable efforts have been made to track the numbers of government social service workers. In the past eight years, nine countries highlighted in this report have carried out some form of mapping exercises, which can then be used to identify human resources policies and practices, existing HR gaps and capacity, workforce numbers, cadres, and types of skills need.

Both the expansiveness and the lack of standardization of nongovernment workers are perhaps best reflected by the broad range of titles used by the nongovernment social service

workforce. While the full range of titles used was challenging to identify, 11 countries reported that 28 different titles are used. Systems to gather data on the nongovernment workforce are absent in many countries.

Professional Associations

Professional associations enhance the professional identity, visibility, growth, and development of the professions they represent. In some countries, professional associations also oversee licensing and registration of social workers. In most countries, separate entities oversee these different areas, often with the association being independent and nongovernmental and the licensing entity entailing more government oversight. A total of 12 countries in this report have active professional associations and provided data for 2014.

Many countries are considering the introduction of a registration and licensing system as a way of enhancing the status and effectiveness of the social work profession, defining and enforcing ethical practice, and promoting the interests of

workers. Establishing a registration or licensing system is a multi-step process involving extensive coordination across different stakeholder groups. Three countries in this report have existing registration systems in place.

Policies and Legislation

Public sector policies and legislation are fundamental to the creation of support structures that facilitate social service workers' education, financing, identity, and status. The availability of (or gaps in) policies and legislation that provide a mandate for and definition of the social service workforce has a profound impact on the development and sustainability of social services in a particular country.

The report reviews legislation that provides definitions of the social workforce in each of the 15 countries. Ten countries were found to have legislation titled "social assistance" or "social welfare," with the express purpose of defining cadres of the social service workforce and their duties.

The significant variations in the legislation in regards to titles, job duties, funding, and structure highlight the need for government enactment and follow up. Many of these laws are often not fully implemented, not due to a lack of will but instead lack of resources and authority among the social service workforce itself.

Implications for Comprehensive Social Service Workforce Strengthening

When the right number of workers are in the right positions and locations and have the right training, vulnerable populations will be able to access more effective and appropriate levels of care and support. In order to achieve this, a diversity of champions and leaders must be able to make sound arguments

Associations Relevant to the Social Service Workforce by Country¹⁴

Country	Name of Association	Number of Members	Code of Ethics	Annual Conference
Ethiopia	Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists (ESSSWA)	2,000	✓	✓
Georgia	Georgian Association of Social Workers (GASW)	570	✓	✓
Ghana	Ghana Association of Social Workers (GASW)	200-250		✓
Indonesia	Ikatan Pekerja Sosial Profesional Indonesia / Indonesia Association of Professional Social Workers (IPSPI)	991	✓	✓
Kenya	Kenya Association of Social Workers			
Myanmar	Myanmar Professional Social Workers Association	100		
Namibia	Social Work and Psychology Council	714	✓	
	Namibia Social Workers Association (NASWA)	190	✓	✓
Nepal	Social Workers Association, Nepal (SWAN)		✓	✓
South Africa	National Association of Social Workers (NASW)	2,000	✓	
	National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW)	3,800	✓	✓
	Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI)	200	✓	✓
	South African Council for Social Service Practitioners (SACSSP)	23,452	✓	✓
Tanzania	Tanzania Association of Social Workers (TASWO)	620	✓	✓
Uganda	National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU)	240		✓
Zambia	Social Workers Association of Zambia (SWAZ)	89		✓
	Zambia Association of Child Care Workers (ZACCW)	1,850	✓	

based on up-to-date data and evidence to strengthen workforce planning, development, and support.

It is critical to collect and consolidate data, evidence, and lessons learned in order to enhance knowledge and awareness of effective strategies to strengthen the workforce and improve the lives of vulnerable people. Implementing workforce mapping exercises and designing human resources information systems (HRIS) will also enable the routine collection of data and evaluation of workforce trends. More data will also be generated as countries continue their efforts to establish social worker registration or licensing systems.

It is hoped that future years' reports will reflect measurement approaches that have been designed, agreed to, and implemented at the country level, allowing for a more systematic approach to gathering data on workforce strengthening efforts.

The report findings are a compilation of data gathered from country questionnaires submitted by UNICEF offices, USAID missions, NGOs, academics and others. International business law firm DLA Piper, in partnership with UNICEF, undertook pro bono review of legislation in the selected countries. The Alliance also gathered data from peer-reviewed literature, gray literature, and individual interviews.

CITATION

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PHOTO CREDITS

Cover photos, top row: Nicole Brown, Nepal 2012; Trevor Snapp for IntraHealth International; **Second row:** Trevor Snapp for IntraHealth International; A child right's activist speaks with children in Lusaka, Zambia, UNICEF/NYHQ2006-127/d'Elbee; **Bottom row:** Salome Namicheishvile for Georgian Association of Social Workers, Georgia

ENDNOTES

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