



Developing Social Work Capacity in Low-Resource Environments:

THE ROLE OF PARA PROFESSIONALS IN THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

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Webinar Series: 10

AGENDA

1. Discussion about the social service workforce
2. Background of the Alliance and the Interest Group on Para Professionals
3. The Para Professional Competency Framework
4. Task Sharing

PARTICIPANT INPUT

■ Poll Question 1:

Does your organization:

- a) Work with children in US only
- b) Work with children in US and other countries
- c) Work with children in other countries only

■ Poll Question 2:

Does your organization currently utilize para professionals to fulfill social service roles?

- a) Yes
- b) No

THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

A variety of workers that contribute to the care, support, promotion of rights and empowerment of vulnerable populations

- ♣ Professional / paraprofessional
- ♣ Formal / informal
- ♣ Paid / unpaid
- ♣ Governmental / non-governmental
- ♣ Service / care providers
- ♣ Case managers
- ♣ Managers and supervisors
- ♣ Trainers and educators
- ♣ Allied workers

THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

- Social service workers create protective environments for healthy development and well-being by:
 - tackling poverty
 - reducing discrimination
 - promoting social justice
 - ensuring protection from family separation, violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect
 - providing needed services
- to care for and support those who need it most





USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AIDS Support and Technical
Assistance Resources



AIDSTAR-Two
capacity for impact

Investing in Those Who Care for Children: Social Welfare Workforce Strengthening Conference CONFERENCE REPORT

November 15-18, 2010 / Cape Town, South Africa

March 15, 2011



HISTORY

Cape Town Conference 2010

THE GLOBAL SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

Vision

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance works toward a world where a well-planned, well-trained and well-supported social service workforce effectively delivers promising practices that improve the lives of vulnerable populations.

Mission

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.

Approach

Serve as a convener for an inclusive, representative network of stakeholders to create a forum for discourse and collective learning

Advance knowledge by deriving, organizing and disseminating critical evidence-based research, resources, tools, models and best practices

Advocate for workforce-supportive policy reforms at the global and national levels



Improving the workforce. Improving lives.

FRAMEWORK FOR STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

■ Planning the Workforce

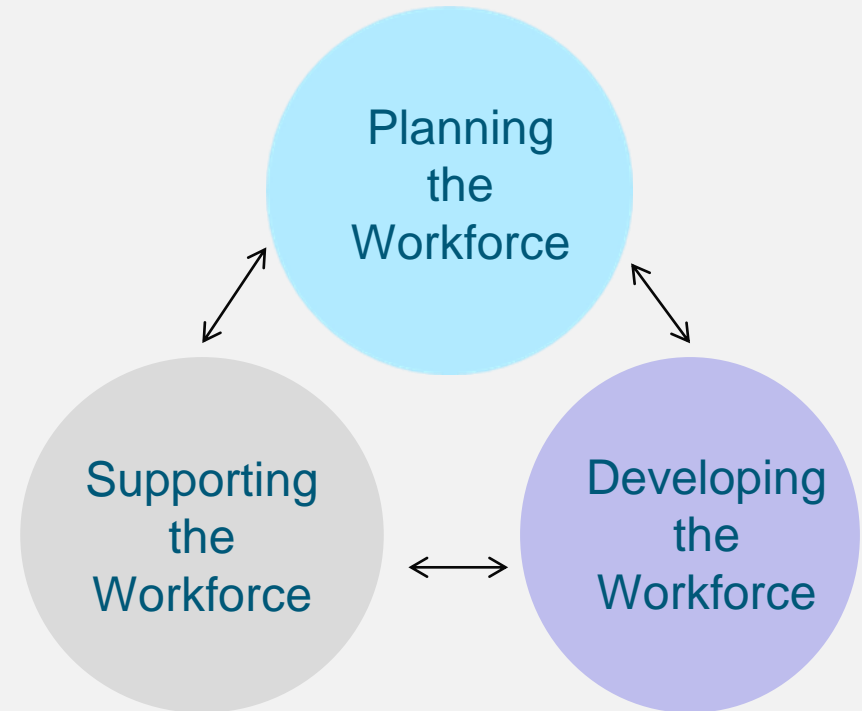
- ♣ Strategic planning based on data
- ♣ Recruitment, hiring and deployment plans
- ♣ Legislative frameworks

■ Developing the Workforce

- ♣ Education and training programs

■ Supporting the Workforce

- ♣ Supervision, incentives, the role of professional associations, licensing systems



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT IN STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

Convene and Connect

21 webinars, Annual Symposium

Integration of workforce-focused panels in conferences

Website member directory, discussion boards

Advance Knowledge

Development and dissemination of tools, reports and case studies

3 Interest Groups and joint product development

E-updates, blogs, website knowledge hub

Advocate

Annual State of the SSW Reports and SSW Week

Ambassador Program and Advocacy Toolkit

Social Media Presence

ALLIANCE INTEREST GROUPS

- ♣ Interest Group on **Building the Evidence Base for Social Service Workforce Strengthening**
 - *SSWS Indicators in partnership with MEASURE Evaluation*
 - *Research Matrix*
 - *Evidence Review*
- ♣ Interest Group on **Para Professionals in the Social Service Workforce**
 - *Guiding Principles for Para Professionals*
 - *Competency Framework for Para Professionals*

PARA PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Para Professionals in the
Social Service Workforce:
Guiding Principles, Functions
and Competencies

1st Edition September 2015

Interest Group on
Para Professionals
in the Social
Service Workforce



Click here to link to the
document:

[Para Professionals in the Social
Service Workforce: Guiding
Principles, Functions and
Competencies](#)

www.socialserviceworkforce.org

INTEREST GROUP ON PARA PROFESSIONALS

- 10/13 – First interest group meeting
- 10/14 – First draft of materials
- 3/15 – After many drafts and wide input, development of first full draft of principles and competency document
- 6/15 and 7/15 – Generic and CYCW competencies reviewed with local para professionals and supervisors in Kenya and Uganda
- 9/15 – Completion and circulation of 1st Edition of *“Para Professionals in the Social Service Workforce: Guiding Principles, Functions and Competencies”*
- Ongoing, to be completed by 12/16 – Two additional sets of competencies specific to para professional social workers and community development workers and 2nd Edition document

WHO ARE PARA PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS?

- The term **para professional** refers to someone who is typically not university educated
- Paraprofessionals receive **specialized courses providing foundational skills in basic social service delivery**
- Paraprofessionals take on a **myriad of titles and roles** within the larger social welfare system (Davis, 2009, Bess, Lopez & Tomaszewski, 2011, Mendenhall, 2012; Mwansa, 2012)
- Paraprofessional workers can be **paid or volunteer** and can **work within government structures, as well as in civil society organizations** (Mendenhall, 2012)

INTEREST GROUP ON PARA PROFESSIONALS

Professionals in the Social Service Workforce: Guiding Principles, Functions and Competencies

- A set of guiding principles for working with para professionals that form a base from which to develop programs and activities related to how these workers can be trained, developed, deployed and supported.
- A competency framework for para professionals that outlines the functions and competencies of para professionals and can be used to provide program guidance, accountability and ultimately inform both training and supervision.

PARA PROFESSIONAL FUNCTIONS AND COMPETENCIES

- Generic/Core functions identified, each with competency areas for practice and training
- Function areas include:

- | |
|--|
| • <i>Communication Skills</i> |
| • <i>Work with children, youth and families</i> |
| • <i>Applies knowledge related to client needs</i> |
| • <i>Community Work</i> |
| • <i>Collaboration Skills</i> |
| • <i>Organization and Leadership</i> |
| • <i>Monitoring and Evaluation Activities</i> |
| • <i>Developing Self and Others</i> |

WORKING TOGETHER WITH FAMILIES



FUNCTION # 2: DIRECT WORK WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Para Professional Functional Areas	Para Professionals Practice Competencies	Para Professional Training Competencies
<p>Facilitating psychosocial assessment of needs and strengths of clients and families, including health, social protection and basic social service concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows an approved assessment protocol to identify household or individual assets and strengths, as well as gaps or needs • Identifies concerns (needs) and strengths of client and family members • Assists clients to prioritize needs and identify potential support sources, both formal and informal • Makes use of basic questionnaires, recording forms, and observation tools • Educates and empowers households to demand for services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates use of assessment indicators and range of potential supportive actions • Demonstrates ability to use assessment tools to gather relevant information to plan services for client and family • Demonstrates ability to follow instructions for the approved assessment and care-planning protocol without making unsubstantiated promises, but with honesty, dignity and respect for all parties concerned • Able to provide information obtained in a timely manner for data-entry and approval of the assessment and recommended actions • Knows what to record, when and how

FAMILY CASE CONFERENCE



TASK SHARING

Social workers are trained to:

- Provide advanced professional practice to individuals, families and communities
- Make decisions about service plans
- Manage complex problems, advanced counseling
- They may supervise others including para social workers

(Training typically is at BSW or MSW level (or diploma), often to meet the national requirements for professional practice)

Para social service workers are trained to:

- Provide support to people and families
- Work with children and families in goal setting and decision making
- Provide case management, link to other resources
- Make referrals as needed
- Work under supervision of social workers

(Training is typically short-term, can include recognized, certified courses)

BECOME A MEMBER

■ Who can join?

A broad range of individuals from NGOs, government, UN agencies, donors, academic institutions, professional associations and others who support the work of strengthening the social service workforce have joined the Alliance network.

■ Why should you join?

Membership in the Alliance brings opportunities for active engagement in a new movement to strengthen the social service workforce. Join with others to advance knowledge, network, and connect and advocate.

♣ How can you join?

Simply fill out a registration here:

www.socialserviceworkforce.org/membership

Q&A

REFERENCES

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Thank
you

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE
VISIT

**WWW.SOCIALSERVICEWORKFORCE.
ORG**

