Strengthening the Social Welfare Workforce

Investing in those who care for children
USG Social Service Workforce Strengthening Efforts

HUMAN CAPACITY WITHIN CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS THE SOCIAL WORK WORKFORCE IN AFRICA

A Human Resources and Capacity Gap Analysis
“Improving Child Welfare Services”
November 2007

REFORMING SOCIAL WELFARE
A NEW DEVELOPMENT APPROACH IN MALAWI’S MINISTRY OF GENDES, CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
NOVEMBER 2009
November 2010 Conference South Africa

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Social Service System

The social service system refers to the system of interventions, programs, and benefits, which are provided by governmental, civil society and community actors to ensure the care and protection of socially or economically disadvantaged individuals and families, including and perhaps most importantly children.
Social Service Workforce

The social service workforce is defined broadly to describe a variety of workers – paid and unpaid, governmental and non-governmental – who staff the social service system and contribute to the care of vulnerable children and families.

- Social Workers
- Para-social workers
- Auxiliary Social Workers
- Welfare Workers
- Child & Youth Care Workers
- Home visitors
- Community Child Care Workers
- Health & Social Welfare Extension Workers
- Child protection officers
- Child/Family Probation Officers
- Community Development Officers
High Vacancy/Turnover Rates

On average social workers leave their jobs within 5 years

Davis, 2009
Challenges

• Staffing plans lack clearly defined strategy and realistic implementation mechanisms.
• Education opportunities are inadequate to meet demand for social welfare workers
• High turn-over Unmanageable Caseloads/Burn out, Lack of career paths
Strengthening the Social Welfare Workforce:

**Planning the Workforce**
- Adopt a strategic approach to planning the social welfare workforce
- Collect and share HR data and promote data-driven decision making
- Improve recruitment, hiring, and deployment practices and systems that take into account urban, peri-urban, and rural areas and decentralization plans
- Build alliances to strengthen leadership and advocacy among stakeholders

**Supporting the Workforce**
- Develop or strengthen systems to improve and sustain social welfare workforce performance
- Develop tools, resources and initiatives to improve job satisfaction and retention
- Support professional associations in their efforts to enhance the professional growth and development of the social welfare workforce

**Country specific context, including social welfare, justice and child protection systems, culture, local legislation, labor market, economy**

**Developing the Workforce**
- Align education and training for the social welfare workforce with effective workforce planning efforts
- Ensure curricula incorporate both local/indigenous knowledge as well as international best practices for improving the well-being of children and families
- Strengthen faculty and teaching methods
- Provide broad range of professional development opportunities for workers
Planning the Workforce

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• Build alliances and coalitions to strengthen leadership and advocacy among broad range of stakeholders
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Promising Practices

Planning for the workforce
• Capacity Assessments
• Comprehensive budgeting exercises
• Development of new cadres of social workers

Developing the workforce
• New curricula development
• Open Distance Learning Programs

Supporting the Workforce
• Psycho-social support for social workers
• Management Training
Country Team Action Plans

Malawi

• **Challenge:** *Current cadre of social workers not well trained*

• **Measurable Result:** *10% (60) of current cadre of social workers enrolled in Diploma/degree programme*
Global Action Plans

Convene key stakeholders, facilitate relationships, and build a community of practice
- Social Service Workforce Strengthening Webinar sessions

Organize and disseminate critical knowledge, resources, tools and best practices
- Social Service Workforce Strengthening Website
- Collect and post Social Service Workforce Strengthening Resources
- Collect and disseminate relevant Human Resources for Health tools and resources
- Launch Social Service Workforce Strengthening listserve and newsletters

Build the evidence base through research and evaluation, and create new guidance, resources, tools, and case studies
- Data to demonstrate:
  - the nature and scope of the global Social Service Workforce crisis
  - the impact of country-level investments on the effectiveness of the Social Service Workforce and ultimately national health, education, and development indicators
  - the relationship between the informal workforce within a formal workforce structure
- Guidelines to address concerns about the social work diaspora

Inform policy through consensus-driven advocacy
- Establish global goals and targets for Workforce Strengthening (including density and distribution of social service workers)