The Composition of the Social Service Workforce in HIV/AIDS-Affected Contexts

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The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

As social service system strengthening assumes a more prominent position on the development agenda, building the capacity of the workforce that staffs this system has become increasingly critical (PEPFAR 2012; Bess, López, and Tomaszewski 2011; Davis, McCaffery, and Conticini 2012). For the purpose of this technical report, a **social service system**[1] is understood as one that addresses both the social welfare and protection of vulnerable populations and includes elements that are preventative, responsive, and promotive (PEPFAR 2012). A well-functioning social service system should include strong linkages with sectors such as health, justice, and education. The system should work to alleviate poverty, facilitate access to basic services, and prevent and respond to issues of abuse, exploitation, neglect, and family separation (ibid.). The **social service workforce** in this case is an inclusive term referring to a variety of workers—paid and unpaid, governmental and nongovernmental—that contribute to the care, support, promotion of rights, and empowerment of vulnerable populations served by the social service system. These workers are present at all levels of society, from kinship networks to civil society and nongovernmental organizations to government positions (PEPFAR 2012; Bess, López, and Tomaszewski 2011; Davis, McCaffery, and Conticini 2012).

The social service workforce is dynamic and frequently context-specific. Therefore, not all countries will utilize the same definitions and assign similar functions for social service workers. Rather, the hope is that in the process of exploring the unique endogenous responses of each country, similarities across and within the different contexts can be identified. The purpose of this technical report is to provide a description of the composition of the social service workforce, including typical functions, titles, and levels and types of education and training. The report is intended to stimulate discussion and help the field move toward a common understanding of 1) functions associated with different cadres within the social service workforce, 2) titles associated with workers who perform these functions, and 3) education or training that is typically associated with these cadres.

The report draws from several sources of data: peer-reviewed articles related to social work, social service workforce, systems strengthening, and other relevant themes; gray literature such as technical reports, social service workforce assessments, job descriptions, training curricula, programmatic reports, and mapping exercises; and communication and/or short interviews with key stakeholders from international child rights organizations, academic institutions, and donor agencies. The literature review primarily focused on social service workforce issues in HIV/AIDS-impacted countries in sub-Saharan Africa.[2]

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[1] In much of the existing literature and programmatic documentation the terms social welfare system and/or social protection system are used to describe interventions, programs, benefits, and services that have, as a primary objective, the provision of services and support mechanisms to promote the well-being, protection, and inclusion of vulnerable populations of a society. In this report, the term social service system includes elements of both social protection and welfare systems.

[2] The countries included Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

Background

During the Social Welfare Workforce Strengthening Conference[3] in Cape Town in 2010, country teams discussed critical social service workforce issues and identified existing gaps and challenges affecting the workforce. Teams developed strategies to plan, develop, and support the workforce and build more sustainable social service systems to care for vulnerable children, particularly those affected by HIV and AIDS. This conference provided a forum to learn about the existing social service workforce within specific countries and offered a helpful illustration of how the workforce is conceptualized by different stakeholders.

Following the 2010 conference, many countries, such as Ethiopia, developed multidisciplinary task forces to lead social service workforce strengthening initiatives (UNICEF 2012). Other countries, including Malawi and Kenya, concluded systems mapping exercises identifying human resources strengths and gaps (Government of Malawi Ministry of Gender, Community, and Child Development and UNICEF 2011; National Council for Children's Services 2010). Still others invested in efforts to support an emerging cadre of paraprofessionals within the system, for example the child care worker cadre in Namibia (Nakuta 2012; USAID 2012a). As systems strengthening work has intensified in these countries, so too has the focus on the social service workforce. The issue has been identified as a core focus in several recent US government documents, including the PEPFAR (2012) orphans and vulnerable children guidance, the report to Congress on Public Law 109-95 (USAID 2012a), and the national action plan on children in adversity (USAID 2012b). The number of workforce strengthening initiatives underway in many countries illustrates the need for further clarification around social service workforce terminology and functions in different contexts.

Given the vast and dynamic nature of the social service workforce, especially in the African context, this report primarily focuses on types of workers who are engaged in work, whether paid or unpaid, with government, nongovernmental, and/or community- and faith-based organizations that are recognized by, referred to, or endorsed by government systems or structures and subject to oversight by government or the organizations to which they report (Nti et al. 2011). The sector not included within this report includes a vast number of family members and children who act as primary caregivers who care for other family members in their homes. While a critical element of the social service system, they fall outside the scope of this report.

The literature review and interviews with key stakeholders involved in or supporting the social service workforce provided helpful insight into some commonalities of different cadres in the various country contexts. Because the literature review focused on more than a dozen countries, prioritizing those in sub-Saharan Africa, it was neither possible nor appropriate to classify all groups or find similarities for every cadre in every country. A more in-depth look at how public-sector social service workers are classified in Kenya is available as an annex.

[3] See http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/investing-those-who-care-children-social-welfare-workforce-strengthening-conference-report for more information on the conference.

Functions

The field of social work and others related to social service provision are heavily influenced by systems theory, in particular Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, and use the person-in-the-environment perspective as a theoretical foundation for their work. The ecological system in which social service workers and their clients operate is often simplified to include three sub-systems: the micro, mezzo, and macro subsystems. The microsystem includes people or institutions with which a client has direct contact on regular basis. Those operating at this level of the system have a direct and immediate impact on a client's well-being (Berk 2000). The mezzosystem includes people and institutions that can influence a client's well-being in less direct but also immediate ways and may include community leaders, district councils, and religious communities. The macrosystem includes people or institutions that are farther removed from a client but help to create an environment that either promotes or inhibits client well-being and typically encompasses national governments, policies, economies, and cultural values.

The functions performed by social service workers are often defined by the level of the ecological system that workers intend to influence. Social service workers operating at the micro level typically focus on activities involving direct service to clients—primarily vulnerable individuals, including children and families. Tasks include those associated with ensuring the welfare of vulnerable individuals by strengthening relationships with the people and institutions within a client's microsystem and their capacity to care for the client, as well as strengthening the capacity of the client to care for him or herself. Social service workers may facilitate access to education, health, legal, and other basic services as well as poverty alleviation strategies. Tasks may also include those associated with the protection of children, the elderly, or disabled, including preventing violence among at-risk populations, and receiving and responding to reports of abuse, exploitation, and neglect. An aspect of many of these tasks is the development and monitoring of case plans and case management and coordination of a range of critical services. These tasks are most often performed at the front lines of the social service system—in communities and neighborhoods. Workers performing these functions are frequently drawn from the communities that they serve and employed as paid or unpaid workers by community-based organizations or government or nongovernmental organizations with a community-level presence. This review found that the vast majority of social service workers carry out microlevel functions.

Social service workers operating at the mezzo level typically focus on activities involving communities, organizations, or groups. Tasks may include mobilization and coordination of education, health, legal, and other basic services for vulnerable populations at the community or district level, management of poverty alleviation activities involving large numbers of economically disadvantaged individuals or communities (including cash transfers or community gardens), facilitation of child welfare committees and forums, and collection and analysis of community-level social service data. Tasks may also include supervision of frontline workers who provide welfare or protection services or management of welfare and protection cases that may require specialized or higher-level skills. Workers at the mezzo level are often responsible for facilitating linkages between government systems of care and support and community-based

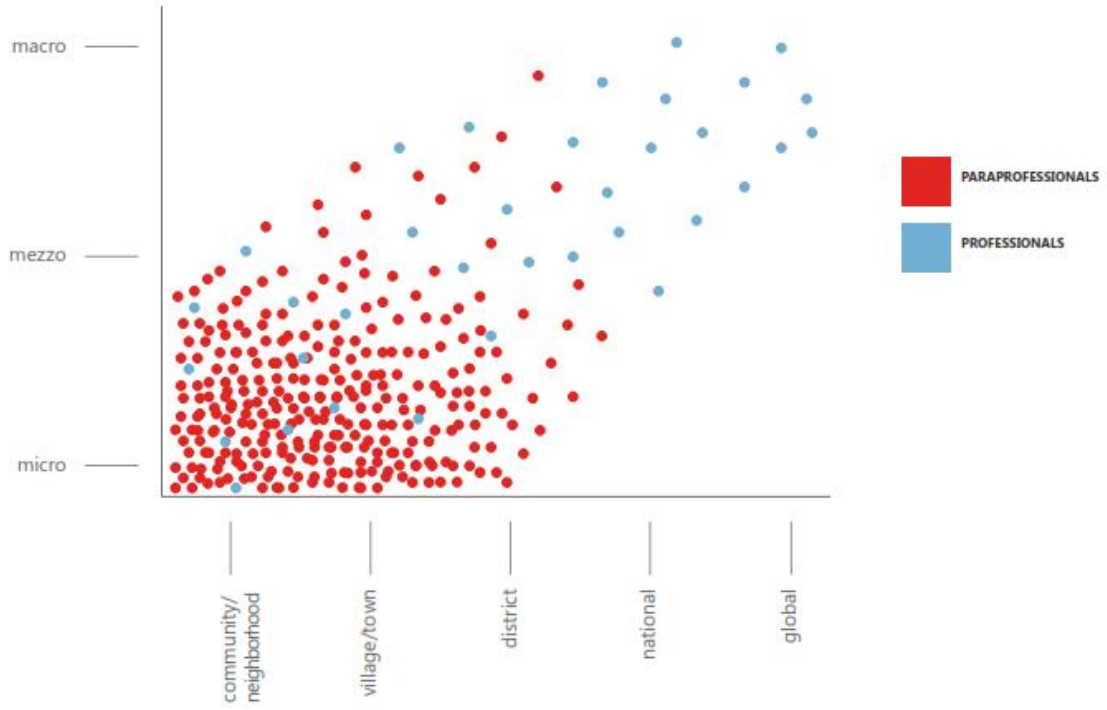
systems of care and support. For example, workers may register and support community-based organizations and monitor the quality of their services. Mezzo-level workers may also manage safe houses; recruit, train, and support foster families; process adoptions; or facilitate other specialized services for vulnerable populations. Workers performing functions at this level are frequently employed by government and nongovernmental organizations based at the district, subcounty, or city level.

Social service workers engaged in macro-level functions are typically involved in tasks including setting and ensuring adherence to national social service policy, standards, and guidelines; designing and overseeing the development of national social service programs; chairing national or social service committees; and supervising social services. Tasks may also include monitoring and evaluating programs and researching national trends, national epidemics, or the impact of social service programs. Workers performing functions at this level are typically employed in management positions within government and nongovernmental organizations at the international, national, regional, or district level.

As part of the review process, it was noted that there is a grouping of workers that could be referred to as allied workers. These are workers who carry out social service functions but are associated with other sectors such as education, health, or justice. Examples include parole officers, health extension workers, and early childhood educators. Those who form the allied workforce perform a myriad of functions that enhance, support, or coordinate with those functions carried out by the social service workforce at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. For example, at the micro level, a health extension worker might identify signs of child abuse or neglect during a routine health visit and refer the family to a community-based social service worker. At the mezzo level, a social service worker might coordinate with the local registrar to organize a birth registration campaign in a hard-to-reach community. At the macro level, social service workers might collaborate with colleagues from the education sector to develop a conditional cash transfer program requiring recipients to enroll their children in school. While allied workers are critical to the social service workforce, this report primarily focuses on social service workers directly associated with the social service system.

Figure 1 illustrates the numbers, location, and functions performed by social service workers based on their educational qualifications. Workers with professional educational qualifications are represented by blue dots, and workers without professional qualifications are represented by red dots. The figure indicates a large number of paraprofessionals performing micro-level functions at the community level and a smaller but significant number of professionals performing mezzo- and macro-level functions at district, national, and global levels. However, it also emphasizes the wide variety of functions carried out by workers with a range of educational qualifications throughout the social service system.

Figure 1: Functions and Location of the Social Service Workforce



Titles

Countries use a range of titles to describe **workers at the macro, mezzo, and micro levels** (see Table 1). The large number of workers performing micro-level functions is clearly illustrated in the more than 20 different titles identified by the survey and interviews that informed this report. In Ethiopia alone, titles for workers at the micro level include auxiliary social worker, psychosocial care worker, and social welfare extension worker (Guyer, Singleton, and Linsk 2012; personal communication with UNICEF Ethiopia). Titles typically describe the specific functions that the worker performs or where the worker is based. The term "community-based" is frequently used within job titles for social service workers who perform micro-level functions in communities or villages. Examples include community caregivers in South Africa and community-based psychosocial workers in Rwanda (USAID 2010a; Bess, López, and Tomaszewski 2011). Similarly, some countries use terms such as "auxiliary" and "assistant" to indicate that workers carry out duties alongside other more senior social service workers. Other countries use the term "volunteer" to indicate that workers are unpaid or not professional but still a critical part of the workforce. In Kenya, the government established a cadre of volunteer children's officers to address a critical gap in the social service workforce due to a large number of vacancies among district and provincial children's officers and other cadres of workers with responsibility for child protection (Government of Kenya Department of Children's Services 2008). The functions of workers at the micro level correspond most closely with the functions attributed to the social welfare associate professional identified in the International Labour Organization's (2007) International Standard Classification of Occupations.

Fewer workers at the mezzo and macro levels result in less diversity among titles. At the mezzo level, like the micro level, titles tend to describe the location in which a worker is based or the geographical area for which the worker is responsible. Titles include regional child protection coordinator (Save the Children, Democratic Republic of the Congo), district probation officer (SUNRISE, Uganda), and child protection officer (Kenya). In Zambia, although some district social welfare officers in smaller districts work directly with children and families, most focus on planning and coordinating services with colleagues from other sectors, such as health and education, as well as backstop provincial child development officers.

At the macro level, titles tend to describe workers with seniority, management functions, and/or responsibilities with a national or country-wide scope. Malawi has been developing a new organogram including titles such as director of social welfare, deputy director of social protection and family support services, and chief social welfare officer for workers who perform macro-level functions at the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare (2012). In Kenya, the chairperson of the National Council for Children's Services (2011) and the director of the Department of Children's Services perform macro-level functions similar to Ethiopia's director of child rights promotion and protection directorate within the Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs (personal communication with UNICEF Ethiopia). The functions of workers at the mezzo and macro levels tend to correspond most closely with the functions attributed to the social welfare manager identified in the International Labour Organization's (2007) International Standard Classification of Occupations.

Table 1 lists typical titles of social service workers carrying out functions at the macro, mezzo, and micro levels. It is important to note that there tends to be greater consistency within the titles of social service workers performing macro- and micro-level functions. The tiles of workers performing mezzo-level functions tend to be highly dependent on the functions and context of the work. To account for this overlap, the column on the left includes job titles that are clearly associated with macro-level functions, and then gradually begins to include titles that could also describe positions associated with mezzo-level functions. The center column continues with titles that are largely associated with mezzo-level functions and the column on the right lists positions typically associated with micro-level functions. In some cases the same title may describe positions associated with both micro- and mezzo-level functions and appear in both the left and center columns. For example, a social worker in Kenya may perform primarily mezzo-level functions, such as supervision of frontline workers, but in Zimbabwe a social worker may carry out micro-level functions, such as working with children who have experienced severe abuse. It is important to note that few workers perform roles exclusive to only one of these functional areas, as workers tend to be called on to perform a blend of functions. However, often one of these functional areas will be more predominant in the course of a person's work.

Table 1: Range of Titles Used for Different Functional Levels of Workers

Macro	Mezzo	Micro
• Director of social welfare • Deputy director of social protection and family support services • Chief social welfare officer • Director of child rights promotion • Director children's services • Program director • National director of nongovernmental organization	• Regional site director of nongovernmental organization • Social worker • Child protection coordinator • Social welfare officer • Children's officer • Social action officer • Child protection officer • Social work lecturer • Community development officer • Assistant community development officer	• Professional child and youth care worker • Social worker • Social auxiliary worker • Auxiliary child/youth worker • Assistant social welfare officer • Assistant community development officer • Child care assistant • Social welfare assistant • Parasocial worker • Community case manager • Community child and youth care worker • Social welfare extension worker • Parasocial work community counselor • Psychosocial care worker • Community caregiver • Volunteer children's officer • Community child protection worker • Child protection committee member
Allied Workers The social service workforce encompasses allied professionals that are found in sectors such as justice, law, education, and health, and hold a broad range of job titles at different levels. For example: • Court social worker • Community justice worker • Early childhood development worker • Early childhood educator • Probation officer • Parole officer • Police officer liaison to a child protection unit • Medical social worker • Community health worker • Health extension worker		

Professional and Paraprofessional Terminology

In carrying out this review, it became clear that the terms "professional" and "paraprofessional" are often used by leaders and practitioners in various countries as another way to differentiate between social service workers. Whereas professionals carry out functions associated with every level of the ecological model (e.g., micro, mezzo, and macro) and every setting, paraprofessionals typically carry out frontline, micro-level functions almost exclusively in a community setting or occasionally a social service institution, such as a child care center. The following section provides further information regarding how these titles or terms have been

defined within the context of the social service workforce. The terms are meant to be descriptive, not judgmental, and both professionals and paraprofessionals provide valuable and effective delivery of needed social services.

How is the term professional used?

As in other fields, the term professional is typically used to denote membership in a profession that is well recognized, often for the specific degree or level of education that it requires, a particular ethical or moral code of conduct, and/or licensing or certification to practice. Among social service workers, the term refers to those workers with at least a bachelor's degree in a field directly related to social services, such as social work. Requirements for licensure and certification vary by country, as do expectations that individuals with a degree possess certain core competencies, have completed fieldwork as dictated by their program, and seek out opportunities for continuing professional development. Professionals are referred to by a range of titles, which are frequently determined by the level of training they have received. Professionals tend to work as paid employees of either government or nongovernmental organizations rather than as volunteers. Associations and councils often advocate at the country, regional, and international levels for policies that protect the use of professional titles. They also encourage the development and use of systems to certify and track the professional workforce and stipulate requirements for education and licensure. For example, in South Africa, the regulatory body South African Council for Social Service Professions requires in-service training for all social service workers to maintain their registered status, a stipulation that motivates workers to consistently refresh their knowledge base and increase their skill set. This mandate also encourages the proliferation of different trainings and professional development options throughout the country (USAID 2010a).

How is the term paraprofessional used?

The term "para" is defined as "next to" or "alongside of." This provides a helpful illustration of how the paraprofessional would typically work next to or support the work of a professional in the same field. To date, there is no agreed upon and recognized definition for a paraprofessional social service worker at either the global or regional level. This is especially true within the African context, where a range of different types of paraprofessionals have been rapidly trained and deployed to fill gaps that might have been filled by professional social service workers if professional workers were available. For the purposes of this report, the term paraprofessional refers to someone who is typically not university-educated (i.e., does not have a bachelor's degree in social work or other related social service field such as sociology or psychology). Paraprofessionals often receive specialized training through courses providing foundational skills in basic social service delivery. Many of the training models vary depending on context and need. Models tend to consist of a series of short courses and field experiences rather than lengthy formal academic training so that paraprofessionals can graduate and deploy relatively quickly. Typically a range of training institutions, including academic institutions, government agencies, or civil society organizations, offer these training courses. Like professionals, paraprofessionals are known by a number of titles, such as psychosocial care worker, parasocial worker, or social auxiliary worker, and depending on their training and, in certain cases, can be paid or volunteers (Davis 2009; Bess, López, and Tomaszewski 2011;

Mendenhall 2012; Mwansa 2012). They may work within government structures as well as for civil society organizations (Mendenhall 2012).

In some countries, the term para is not preferred or readily used, such as in Kenya where terms such as assistant or volunteer are used to describe social service workers with less training who support professionals in the field. There are efforts to find other terms to differentiate between cadres as some people feel that the term para devalues the competencies and skills of workers and at the same time undermines the importance of formal education required to become a professional degree-level social service worker, as is the case in Ethiopia (personal communication with UNICEF Ethiopia). At the same time, in other countries the term is used without negative implications (e.g., parasocial worker in Tanzania).

Educational and Training Requirements

Education requirements tend to correspond to the level of specialization and responsibility assigned to the social service worker. Workers performing micro-level functions, although challenging, often hold the lowest qualifications. Workers with higher educational qualifications and experience tend to carry out mezzo- and macro-level functions. As noted previously, some workers at the mezzo- and macro-level may also perform micro-level functions. However, these workers tend to focus on more complicated cases that require their specialized training. More educated social service workers in private practice may also carry out micro-level functions, such as individual or family therapy for paying clients.

It is important to note that educational requirements for social service workers at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels vary significantly by country and often depend on the availability of credentialed workers. In countries with sufficient numbers of highly educated workers, workers with bachelor's, master's, or more advanced degrees may work at all three levels. It is estimated that 300 schools or departments provide social work education courses across the 54 countries in Africa (Mwansa 2011). Of the countries assessed for this report, all 12 offered a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree, nine offered Master of Social Work (MSW) degrees, and two offered further graduate study, including a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in social work (see Table 2). Degree and diploma-level training programs reviewed for this analysis ranged in length from six months to three years, with most programs ranging between 18 and 24 months. Minimum qualifications for entrance into degree and diploma-level programs typically include completion of the tenth or twelfth grade or the equivalent of a high school or secondary school diploma for bachelor's-level coursework, and a bachelor's degree for master's- and PhD-level coursework. Degree and diploma-level programs can include either in-service or preservice courses, distance learning, and frequently incorporate at least one supervised field placement or practicum. It is unclear at this point how many students these programs graduate. In addition, because social work degrees earned in many of these countries, such as Zimbabwe, may qualify workers to find employment in South Africa or the United Kingdom, many may emigrate shortly after graduation. As a result, it is difficult to estimate the number of credentialed workers based on graduation rates.

Table 2: Availability of Higher Education in Social Work in 11 Countries

	Bachelor of Social Work	Master of Social Work	PhD in Social Work
Botswana	✓	✓	
Ethiopia	✓	✓	✓
Kenya	✓	✓	
Mozambique	✓		
Namibia	✓ *BA in social work*	✓ *MA in clinical psychology*	
Nigeria	✓	✓	
Rwanda	✓		
South Africa	✓	✓	✓
Tanzania	✓	✓	
Uganda	✓	✓	
Zambia	✓	✓	

Note: Data unavailable for Côte d'Ivoire

In countries such as Uganda and Malawi, where schools of social work are nascent, or countries such as Zimbabwe, where there is a severe shortage of social service workers, employers who might have preferred social workers hire workers with other related degrees, such as psychology, sociology, or child rights (personal communication with Dr. Janestic Mwende Twikirize, UNICEF Uganda; Government of Malawi Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare and UNICEF 2011; USAID 2010b). Often these workers will be provided extended orientation programs and continuing education to equip them with the necessary skills to do their jobs, as well as close supervision by a qualified social worker. These positions may also require ongoing professional development and skill upgrades, prompting some countries to institute mandatory continuing education for bachelor's- and master's-level social workers and workers with degrees from related fields.

Many countries with limited social service educational opportunities and few qualified social service workers have also launched strategies to rapidly train and deploy lower-skilled workers or paraprofessionals to carry out functions typically performed by more qualified workers. In Mozambique, Tanzania, Namibia, and Malawi, these strategies include the development of specialized certificate-level training programs affiliated with academic or government training institutions and accredited by an official body (see text box on next page). Certificate-level training programs range between 15 days and 18 months in length. Minimum qualifications for entrance into training programs range between basic literacy and numeracy skills to completion of tenth or twelfth grade. Certificate programs also include either in-service or preservice courses, distance learning, and at least one supervised field placement or practicum. Trainings of less than 15 days do not usually result in a formal qualification; however, a number of nongovernmental organizations issue informal certificates to workers for topic-specific training. For example, community child protection committee members are sometimes offered certificates for short-term training in child rights or techniques for identifying and supporting vulnerable children. Because informal certificate-level programs are less regulated than officially recognized certificate-, degree-, and diploma-level programs, tracking graduation rates and

estimating the numbers of social service workers based on graduation rates is even more difficult.

Many mid- to upper-level nongovernmental staff such as child protection managers or social service coordinators hold social work degrees and choose to work within the nongovernmental sector instead of government. In some countries, it is more common to encounter those holding a BSW degree or MSW degree within nongovernmental organizations and not in government due to better compensation and career advancement opportunities (Bess, López, and Tomaszewski 2011; Davis 2009).

Strategies to Rapidly Train and Deploy Lower-Skilled Workers: Examples from the Field

In Malawi, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Community Development hires multiple categories of workers including social welfare officers (senior level), assistant social welfare officers (midlevel), and social welfare assistants (entry level). To fill the human resources gap, Malawi introduced a lower-level social service position, the community child protection worker, which is either on the government payroll or supported by a stipend from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (Cabran 2012).

In Tanzania, the Institute of Social Work prioritized workforce development of parasocial workers by training community volunteers in the delivery of certain basic social welfare services. As these workers acquire additional training and experience, a social welfare assistant position acts as an avenue for career progression and retention—with the end goal to bolster the social service workforce as a whole (Linsk and Kaijage 2012; USAID 2010c).

In Namibia, results of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare's (2007) gap analysis indicated a need for intermediate-level workers to relieve some of the administrative burden felt by professional social workers. In response, the ministry has committed to hiring sufficient community child care workers to take on certain duties—such as applying for various child grants available to children and their caregivers—that require some specialized training in child development and assessment but not social work certification or licensure (USAID 2010d).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the vast differences in social service systems across the countries featured in this technical report, the report focuses on only most commonly mentioned functions, titles, and educational levels associated with workers at the macro, mezzo and micro levels. This review is not exhaustive but rather a snapshot—a quick assessment of literature describing the workforce in HIV/AIDS-affected contexts, more specifically in sub-Saharan Africa, that can and should be expanded upon and updated over time. The report is intended to enhance an ongoing process of identifying commonalities and differences across the social service workforce in different countries and within unique cultural contexts. This is especially true regarding the process of defining cadres of paraprofessionals. Some countries have abundant documentation describing

training curricula, competencies, functions, and professional standards while others appear to be in nascent stages of the workforce development process.

Taking into consideration these differences across countries, we propose additional emphasis on some broad areas—including examples of promising practices—that will help to clarify the composition of social service workforce.

Human resources capacity assessments can be valuable tools for gathering data and planning. Human resources capacity assessments or mapping exercises aimed at gathering more data on the national social service workforce are strongly recommended for countries where this information is not readily available (PEPFAR 2012). When a human resources capacity assessment is done well, it brings together a range of key stakeholders involved in the workforce, from relevant government ministries, civil society organizations, and community leadership. It is an opportunity not only to collect and assess data related to the current workforce but is a useful tool in the process of developing evidence-based workplans and identifying staffing patterns, competency gaps, and key areas for interventions and targeted advocacy. Human resources assessments have been completed in Namibia, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Malawi resulting in increased interest in addressing the identified gaps and building on the strengths of the social service workforce in those countries. An effective human resources capacity assessment can act as an engine of change for not only the social service workforce but also for larger system strengthening efforts.

It is recommended that assessments mapping the workforce use the ecological model as a framework to organize data. Within countries, organizing workforce data to describe which workers perform micro, mezzo, and macro functions may make it easier for social service workforce strengthening leaders to identify important gaps and make better investment decisions. In addition, it will be easier to compare and contrast data about workers performing similar functions across countries.

A multifaceted workforce comprised of workers operating across the ecological system can address a broader range of social service delivery needs and have a positive impact on retention, career path development, and effective supervision. This technical report recognizes that each country has developed different job titles and educational requirements depending on local social service needs, traditions, and the availability of resources—including human resources. While highly-skilled workers with professional recognition or licenses are a critical component of a competent workforce and functioning social service system, positions should also be available for workers meeting diploma or certificate requirements to respond to immediate needs for social service delivery in resource-constrained settings, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Many countries, faced with pressing issues such as the HIV epidemic, poverty, and conflict, recognize that long-term investment in educating and training the next class of bachelor's- or master's-level social workers is only one part of a multipronged strategy to strengthen the social service system.

Establishing a range of clear functions, titles, and educational requirements for workers operating at range of levels within the ecological model allows for a comprehensive, multitiered approach to providing needed support and services to vulnerable populations. In addition, it enables workers to envision a clear path to advance in their career with their experience at each level informing their work at other levels. As workers advance, for example, their past experiences at the micro level as well as professional development in management and leadership will allow them to provide more effective supervision and can ultimately help to retain them in the system.

Ongoing clarification of workforce terminology is needed. Both within and across countries, there continues to be confusion around the definition of a professional and paraprofessional social service worker. For example, what constitutes a paraprofessional in terms of length of training required and competencies is still nebulous. The training in the certificate-level cadres ranges from 15 days to 18 months, illustrating the vast range of training programs that currently exists. Some countries, such as Ethiopia, are in the process of trying to standardize paraprofessional training curricula and competencies (UNICEF Ethiopia 2012), which should be viewed as a necessary first step in creating recognition and a common understanding of their expected duties.

Beyond training, there is also significant variation of the terms of employment or engagement within the paraprofessional category. In many instances volunteers are unpaid, although they have received in-service or preservice training and are recognized as part of the social service workforce. In other cases, workers are called volunteers but receive a stipend or are on the government payroll, thus making the term volunteer confusing. More clarity needs to be developed in terms of defining specific cadres within the paraprofessional category. Training can then be better aligned with workplace needs and contexts, and the important and various roles of the workforce can be better described and advocated for.

The provision of licenses or certification to social service workforce cadres supports role clarity. One approach to clarifying the functions of the social service workforce at various level of the ecological system is to establish professional standards of practice, credentials and certifications, licensing and registration, and professional development and continuing education. Professional social work associations or social work councils are typically tasked with these duties and as such should be included in efforts to standardize roles, titles, and curricula for the different cadres. Professional associations of social workers and related professions appear to be developing or are being strengthened in many of the highlighted countries.

The Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers, and Anthropologists (ESSSWA) has increased its membership and is working closely with government entities and UNICEF to increase awareness around the role of social work and promote the development of a clearly defined, formal paraprofessional cadre (Cabran 2012; personal communication with ESSSWA). The Zimbabwe Council of Social Workers has a primary purpose to conduct examinations and register social workers. In Namibia, the Social Work and Psychology Act of 2004 established the Namibia Social Work and Psychology Council to regulate the field of social work (Government of

Namibia Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare 2007). Social workers must register with the council to practice and are required, since 2010, to take part in continuing professional development (Ananias and Lightfoot 2012). Similarly, the South Africa Council for Social Service Professions (2012) sets education, training, and practice standards for several social work cadres and registers social workers. Many scholars are calling on regional associations that support social work education, such as the Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa, to demand systems for certification and licensing (Mwansa 2011; Sewpaul and Lombard 2004). The strengths of these efforts can be further assessed and as appropriate, built on in other countries.

Conclusion

This literature review was an opportunity to explore the many different types of workers that make up the social service workforce that cares for and supports vulnerable children and families. Although the report identified challenges, they should not be considered insurmountable. Rather, they should be reflected upon and, where appropriate, country-specific responses should be developed and incorporated into existing workforce strengthening efforts. Continued efforts to refine terminology, functions, and titles, align training and education with required functions, and identify ways to provide stronger supervision and professional recognition or certification to these cadres would be useful steps to strengthen the workforce.

What is evident from the literature review is that the existing social service workforce in HIV-affected contexts includes a dynamic and dedicated group of people. From volunteer caregivers to professors of social work, the wide range of people involved in and passionate about the social service workforce is growing. As efforts continue to focus on strengthening the larger social service system, working toward standardization of definitions, functions, and competencies of the social service workforce is essential. This effort should continue to recognize the endogenous responses that have developed in the different contexts while simultaneously attempting to find important commonalities. In doing so, we hope that this will promote unified efforts to build further support and increase recognition of the invaluable role the social service workforce plays in supporting, protecting, and advocating for vulnerable children and families.

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Annex: The Composition of the Social Service Workforce in HIV/AIDS-Affected Contexts: Spotlight on Kenya

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Purpose

In the technical report, The Composition of the Social Service Workforce in HIV/AIDS-Affected Contexts (Bunkers et al. 2014), the authors drew on a wide-ranging array of sources to describe typical functions, titles and education and training associated with the social service workforce. (There are several terms used to define the workforce that is engaged in child protection and welfare and social protection, and they tend to vary from country to country. They include terms like social welfare, child welfare, or as is now readily used by the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance and others, social service.) The report was meant to be broad in scope and provide a reasonably comprehensive survey from many countries. While much can be learned from this kind of overview, it is also helpful to look in-depth at a particular country and context to see how this type of targeted analysis can complement or serve to exemplify the larger, multicountry approach.

The purpose of this annex is to augment the broader view of the workforce with a closer examination of the workforce in one country, in this case Kenya. This document draws on data gathered during a social service workforce situational analysis carried out in 2012 (López, Guyer, and Mutie 2013).

The Organization of Kenya's Social Service Workforce

The technical report uses a broad definition of the workforce, defining it as "a variety of workers—paid and unpaid, governmental and nongovernmental—that provide care and support within the social service system" (Bunkers et al. 2014, 2). This definition is appropriate to describe the workforce in Kenya. It includes workers performing functions at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and recognizes allied professionals from other sectors such as education, justice, and health. In Kenya, from a public-sector perspective, ministries that deploy and manage members of the social welfare workforce include the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Local Government, and Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation.

Table 1 describes general social service functions associated with each of these ministries, but does not distinguish between functions provided by social service workers at different levels of the ecological model as it was not used during data collection for the original report.

Table 1: Key Ministries' Functions in Social Service Provision to Children in Kenya

Ministry	Department	Social Service Mandate	Functions
Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development	Department of Children's Services	Charged with safeguarding the welfare of Kenya's children	Establish, promote, coordinate, and supervise children's services in Kenya Ensure implementation of child welfare activities throughout Kenya Maintain updated records on children and services Ensure implementation of decisions made by the National Council for Children's Services
	Department of Gender and Social Development	Charged with oversight of cash transfers for disabled and elderly; ensuring gender policy is implemented; and registering local grassroots organizations	Oversee cash transfer programs for elderly (often caregivers of orphans and vulnerable children) and disabled (sometimes orphans and vulnerable children and caregivers) Register local nongovernmental and faith-based organizations doing work for orphans and vulnerable children and caregivers at the local level
Ministry of Home Affairs	Probation	In charge of probation services for the country	Ensure protection of all children on probation and doing community service
	Prison Services	In charge of prison services in Kenya	Ensure protection of all children involved in prison services in Kenya
Ministry of Local Government	Street Families Rehabilitation Trust Fund	Mandated to raise funds to facilitate support and rehabilitation of children and families who live on the streets	Provide reintegration, legal support, social services, referral to health services, and payment of school fees for street children
Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation	Division of Community Health	Charged with providing health services and an enabling environment for delivery of services to orphans and vulnerable children	Notify authorities of violence against children Ensure children from remand homes or rehabilitation schools who receive treatment return home safely

With each ministry taking the lead for a different set of services to children, the workforce that staffs each ministry adheres to specific schemes of service or job descriptions and is assigned to a department or institution.

Educational Requirements for the Government Workforce

Table 2 illustrates the educational requirements for government workers who make up Kenya's social service workforce. The table does not include those workers engaged in the nonprofit sector or home-based care. The table is organized according to the functions associated with each level of the ecological model and the titles of positions responsible for these functions. However, it should be stressed that these functions are illustrative rather than exact and that the Kenyan government does not describe functions as micro, mezzo, or macro. Functions have

been categorized as micro, mezzo, and macro in an approximate by the authors of the report in an effort to organize information according to a common framework.

Table 2: Educational Requirements for Kenya's Government-Supported Social Service Workforce

Functional Level	Title	Ministry	Department	Required Education	Postemployment Training
Macro	Secretary of children's affairs	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development	Department of Children's Services	Data not available	Data not available
	Director of children's services	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development	Department of Children's Services	Data not available	Data not available
	Deputy director	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development	Department of Children's Services	Data not available	Data not available
	Senior assistant director of children's services	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development	Department of Children's Services	Data not available	Data not available
	Assistant director of children's services	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development	Department of Children's Services	Data not available	Data not available
	Principal, children's services	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development	Department of Children's Services	Data not available	Data not available
Mezzo	Children's officer	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development	Department of Children's Services	Four-year BA degree (social work, sociology, community development, others)	Data not available
	Probation officer	Ministry of Home Affairs	Probation	Four-year BA degree (social work, sociology, psychology, others)	Induction: two weeks
	Social welfare officer II	Ministry of Home Affairs	Prisons Service	Four-year degree (social work, psychology, counseling, anthropology)	Nine-month training/ induction course
	Social development officer	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development	Department of Gender and Social Development	Data not available	Data not available

Functional Level	Title	Ministry	Department	Required Education	Postemployment Training
Micro	Childcare assistant	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development	Department of Children's Services	Secondary education certificate and diploma (social work, child psychology)	Three-month course organized by the department
	Social welfare officer III	Ministry of Home Affairs	Prisons Service	Diploma	Nine-month training/ induction course
	Community health worker	Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation	Division of Community Health	Data not available	Data not available
	Volunteer children's officer	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development	Department of Children's Services	No education requirement	Varying levels of training in children's rights, report completion, child rescues
	Volunteer probation officer	Ministry of Home Affairs	Probation	No education requirement	One-week training

Who Provides the Training and Education?

As described by López, Guyer, and Mutie (2013), education and training for social service workers is offered at a variety of levels and schools in Kenya. Two universities have bachelor's degree programs in fields related to social services: the University of Nairobi, which has a bachelor's degree in social work, and Daystar University, which also offers bachelor's and master's degrees in early child development. Both schools also provide less time-intensive options through one-year diploma programs in social work and child development, respectively. Along these lines, the Kenya Institute of Social Work and Community Development offers one-year certificates and two-year diplomas in several subject areas vital to strengthening the social service workforce and caring for highly vulnerable children, such as courses in social work and social welfare, early childhood development, psychology and counseling psychology, community development, HIV and AIDS management, and medical and health counseling. Admission to these programs is open to all regardless of their employment status. There are also a number of in-service training programs, too numerous to be addressed in this analysis, operated by formal educational institutions as well as by a variety of nongovernmental organizations.

The Government Social Service Workforce: Only Part of the Picture

This case study describes only government workers, the functions they perform, the different ministries and departments that employ them, and the educational qualifications required for employment. López, Guyer, and Mutie (2013) did attempt to collect data on social service workers not employed by the government, and received responses from five of 47 nongovernmental and community-based organizations that were sent requests for data. Even though responses were limited, the organizations that responded had a geographic reach covering 36 of the 47 counties in Kenya; the functions performed by the workers that they

employed included child assessments, family services, other essential services to orphans and vulnerable children, skills training for parents, placement for children outside of family care, and the provision of cash transfers. López, Guyer, and Mutie conclude that the workforce deployed by nongovernmental and community-based organizations is larger than the workforce deployed by the government.

There are serious gaps in the government workforce. López, Guyer, and Mutie (2013, 17) describe workforce gaps as follows:

> A shortage of staffing was identified in all ministries: as reported in interviews, there is a shortfall of 550 SWOs [social welfare officers] against an approved total of 800 in the Prisons Rehabilitation and Welfare Services of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Further, there is no defined budget for civilian SWOs within the total of 800, yet they uniquely have the well-being of children in the system as their priority (uniformed SWOs address prison security issues as their priority). Additional anecdotal data indicate a shortfall of 370 POs [probation officers] against a goal of 1,000. In a detailed report from the DCS [Department of Children's Services], a shortfall of 557 COs [children's officers] against a total of 963 authorized positions was indicated.

Concluding Observations

The Kenya case study illustrates several of the key concepts outlined in this technical report. For example, Kenya provides a vivid example of the report's inclusive definition of social service workers. The case study identifies many positions within four major ministries and acknowledges that workers employed by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health also carry out critical social service functions. This level of diversity is all the more impressive given that the case study report focuses mainly on the government sector. If workers employed by nongovernmental and community-based organizations had been included in this case study, the resulting analysis would have described a significantly more diverse and complicated workforce, functions, titles, and educational requirements. Clearly an additional and broader analysis of both the government and nongovernmental social service workforce could provide a more complete picture of an even more robust and comprehensive workforce.

Using the ecological model to categorize functions performed by social service workers provides a useful framework for understanding the relationship between workers and how workers collaborate to provide a comprehensive set of social services to vulnerable populations—in this case study, vulnerable children. Each of these functions is valuable and critical to ensuring the effectiveness of services provided by the social service system. The model also helps Kenyan policy-makers and decision-makers to identify gaps within social services and within the workforce that provides these services. Once these gaps are known, initiatives to strengthen the workforce (e.g., education and training, setting up a clear career path) can be more strategic, efficient, and successful. The model can also assist efforts to strengthen linkages between workers and referral systems. While López, Guyer, and Mutie did not delve into coordination issues in depth, they did recognize the need for better coordination, a conclusion that comes up in almost every workforce gap analysis.

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