



# **Functional Review of the Government Social Service Workforce in Relation to Child Protection**

## **FINAL REPORT**

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## Acronyms

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CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CDO	Community Development Officer
CFPU	Child and Family Protection Unit
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
DPP	Directorate of Public Prosecution
GBVMIS	Gender Based Violence Management Information System
IP	Implementing Partner
KCCA	Kampala City Council Authority
LMMIS	Labour Market Management Information System
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MIS	Management Information System
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MoPS	Ministry of Public Service
NALMIS	National Adult Literacy Management Information System
OSHMIS	Occupational Safety and Health Management Information System
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
OVCNIS	Orphans and Vulnerable Children Management Information System
PCDO	Principal Community Development Officer
PSWO	Probation and Social Welfare Officer
SAGE	Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment
SAGEMIS	Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment Management Information System
SDSP	Social Development Sector Plan
SOCY	Sustainable Outcomes for Children and Youth
SUNRISE-OVC	Strengthening Uganda's National Response for Implementation of Services to Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPF	Uganda Police Force
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWEP	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme
UWEPNIS	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme Management Information System
YLP	Youth Livelihood Programme
YLPNIS	Youth Livelihood Programme Management Information System

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# Executive Summary

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## Introduction

This report presents the findings of the “**Functional review of the Government social service workforce in relation to child protection**”. The review was commissioned by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Coordinating Comprehensive Services for Children (4Children) Uganda System Strengthening project. The goal of the functional review was to inform efforts geared towards strengthening the functionality of the social service workforce, taking into account changes in the legal and policy framework and global trends in social protection and child protection in particular. The purpose of the review was to support the MGLSD’s Directorate of Social Protection and the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)’s Directorate of Local Government Inspection to harmonise and clarify the roles and responsibilities of Probation and Social Welfare Officers (PSWOs), District Community Development Officers (DCDOs), Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs), and sub-county Community Development Officers (CDOs). Elements explored included: a skills inventory of the social service workforce, performance-based management standards and processes, capacity-strengthening needs and strategies, communication and coordination at different levels, and the organisational environment. An organisational development approach was adopted, involving a participatory and consultative process led by a technical working group. National-, district-, and sub-county-level staff and stakeholders were consulted through regional workshops and interviews with key stakeholders.

## 1. Key findings

### 1.1 *The changing landscape of child protection and the social service workforce*

Despite efforts by government leaders, development partners, and other stakeholders to promote the rights and welfare of children, child protection remains a daunting challenge for Uganda. Child rights violations take different forms, ranging from the denial of a child’s right to an identity to outright abuse and exploitation, with an estimated 51% of all children in Uganda being categorised as vulnerable. Children in Uganda are also increasingly exposed to different forms of violence and maltreatment, including physical, sexual, and emotional violence. A recent national survey on violence against children (MGLSD 2015) reported that three in four children experience some type of violence during their childhood, while approximately one in three (girls, 27%; boys 30%) experience two different types of violence. These findings suggest that government and civil society organisations have an increased responsibility for direct service delivery. The Government of Uganda is responding to the plight of children through its renewed commitment to improving the legal and policy framework for child care and protection and through its active pursuance of a care reform agenda. This commitment is demonstrated through the formulation of new laws, bills, and statutes, as well as amendments to existing policies, including: amendments to the Children Act (2016); the National Alternative Care Framework, 2012; the Children (Approved Homes) Rules, 2013, Statutory Instruments Supplement No. 30, S.I. No. 52; and the establishment of a national child helpline (116), through which reports and referrals are increasingly being made. Besides efforts to strengthen the professional social service workforce, there is increasing engagement by parasocial workers at the community level. All of these changes to the legal, regulatory, and practice environment are contributing significantly to improving child care and protection responses. At the same time, this changing landscape demands a redefinition of the roles, mandates, and quality of the social service workforce, as well as the implementation structure requirements related to child care and protection. The roles and responsibilities that have come with the ongoing changes in legal and policy instruments have unfortunately not been accompanied by changes in staff establishments or recruitment. The social service workforce

is currently overstretched and constrained in delivering child protection services. Issues of burnout and low staff morale caused by poor remuneration have exacerbated the workforce challenges.

## **1.2 Mandates and roles of key ministries in a decentralised system**

In a decentralised system, the roles of the central government (i.e., the roles of the MGLSD) are those of oversight, policy formulation, technical capacity-building, resource mobilisation, monitoring and evaluation, technical backstopping, and multisectoral coordination, while the roles of the local government are to enforce rules and regulations and to deliver actual services. The MGLSD assumes policy- and strategic-level responsibility for child protection and for safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups, while the MoLG's mandate is to ensure adherence to the legal and policy framework, regulations, procedures, and rules. As per the Local Governments Act (as amended 2015, local authorities are mandated to deliver child care and protection services, while the Ministry of Public Service (MoPS) is responsible for administering human resource policies. Justice, law and order sector institutions promote the observance of human rights and coordinate access to justice for vulnerable groups, including children. The central ministries provide oversight through social development sector plans, child protection policies and legal frameworks, capacity-building interventions, and the mobilisation of resources through national budgets and development partners, and to some extent, they have succeeded at coordination. The MoPS manages and administers human resource policies, procedures, and structures to facilitate effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery.

These key players understand their mandates and roles. The MGLSD and justice, law and order sector institutions have been at the forefront of formulating new policies, laws, bills, and statutes, as well as amendments to existing laws to create an environment for social development and increased access to justice for children. The MoPS has also been effective in providing human resources policies, systems, and guidelines for the social service workforce. For example, it has been proactive in responding to recruitment needs for child protection by providing for the position of the PSWO and by making necessary adjustments to organisational structures, including by providing job descriptions and specifications.

In terms of resource mobilisation, national budgeting and development partner support have been the major sources of funding for social welfare interventions, but these resources are not adequate to support the legal and policy requirements. For example, in the districts covered in this review, probation and social welfare received less than 1% of the total MoLG budget. The inadequate funding originates with the MGLSD, which receives no more than 1% of the national budget. Additional resources are also raised through unconditional and conditional grants by local governments. The MGLSD is continuously engaging the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development on the need to increase the allocation of funds or provide subsidiary budget to deal with child care and protection, albeit with little success.

Regarding capacity-building, the three key stakeholders—the MGLSD, the MoLG, and the MoPS—have well-articulated plans that cover a range of training areas and approaches. The MGLSD has in the past implemented short-term (in-service) training courses for the social service workforce, including, for example, courses in child protection, case management, and justice and the law. Efforts have also been made to orient staff to recent changes in the legal framework. The review found that at least 43% of the sampled social service workforce had received some form of in-service training, with PSWOs having the highest proportion of those who had undertaken relevant in-service training (50%), followed by DCDOs and CDOs (41%), and with the least amount of training recorded among Labour Officers (20%, i.e., one out of five).

Concerning supervisory visits, as part of capacity-building, the MGLSD and other stakeholders have conducted visits to districts implementing specific projects. The same applies to



monitoring and evaluation: only districts implementing projects are monitored, as the supporting development partners provide the funding. It is hoped that the single registry system being implemented will supplement monitoring and evaluation efforts.

In terms of coordination, within the MGLSD, an inter-directorate and department system of weekly meetings is used as the main coordinating structure. A lack of counterpart arrangements between the MoLG and the MGLSD weakens this coordination. At multisectoral levels, national coordination structures exist, but their effective functioning has been undermined by several factors, including the multiplicity of these structures. The justice, law and order sector mechanism is being relied upon, as it is the most effective and harmonised coordination structure. At the district level, while structures do exist, they are too many and are mostly project-based, having been initiated by different development and/or implementing partners. Other coordination issues include: overemphasising committee meetings as the mode of coordination at the expense of other needs, such as communicating promptly; streamlining roles, responsibilities, and functions to avoid duplication; strengthening referral systems; and information-sharing. The MGLSD has, however, developed several management information systems (MISs) that have facilitated more coordinated, harmonised, and relatively easy reporting. These systems include MISs for orphans and vulnerable children (OVCMIS), for remand homes (RHMIS), and for gender-based violence (GBVMIS). The online systems ensure the timely capturing and reporting of similar information from all the districts and lower local governments.

Despite the efforts being made to ensure a productive environment for social service workforce planning, development, and support, the central ministries will need to consider:

- Developing strategies for long-term human resource needs in terms of numbers, required knowledge, competencies, and development needs for the social service workforce
- Intensifying the dissemination of relevant policies, laws, statutes, regulations, and guidelines to community-based services departments
- Providing enough translated copies of the laws, especially the Children Act (2016, as amended), and policies for lower local government and community-level staff
- Continuing to lobby for increased budget allocation for social development in general and for addressing the situation of children in particular
- Improving their capacity-building roles through induction and mentorship, and by providing relevant pre- and in-service technical trainings to the social service workforce
- Expediting the establishment of a harmonised, national-level coordination structure
- Providing adequate logistical and administrative support, including workspaces
- Extending monitoring and evaluation and providing technical supervisory visits to all government programmes.

### **1.3 Social service workforce structure, systems, and operational practices**

The local government functional structure is elaborated in legal instruments, with well-established accountability centres and job establishments at different levels, including at the district local government, urban authority, and sub-county levels. At the district level, the social service workforce is hosted within the community-based services department and is mandated to deliver child protection services and to promote the welfare of the children. This department reflects the roles and functions of the central level. Its structure considers the fact that child care and protection are multisectoral and multidimensional and therefore implementation cuts across all departments. The community-based services department is headed by the DCDO, who in turn reports to the CAO, the overall accounting officer in the district.

While the organisational structure conforms to design principles, including reporting relationships, the review noted the following concerns:

- The technical reporting and supervision relationship regarding probation and social welfare at the centre (i.e., the MGLSD) is not explained, implying that there is no coaching nor mentorship from central- to district-level staff.
- The functions of community development, labour, and probation and social welfare converge into one function at the sub-county level, thus overwhelming the CDO to an extent that the quality of services is compromised. The CDO performs community awareness tasks, labour and gender tasks, and broadly, social protection tasks at this level, in addition to providing probation and social welfare services.
- The relationship between probation and social welfare services at the district and sub-county level is weak, suggesting that there is no district functional responsibility for the PSWO function vested with the CDO at the sub-county level. This disconnect signals a lack of formal recognition of the child protection function at the sub-county level.
- The structure and its operationalisation limits the career progression for Senior PSWOs and Senior CDOs due to requirements of serving at the principal officer level before aspiring to the DCDO position.
- Some job titles, such as District Community Development Officer, are misleading, as they do not reflect the roles and responsibilities of the position. This job title also communicates an emphasis on community development at the expense of child protection and welfare.
- The operational and functional relationship between the community-based services department and justice, law and order sector institutions is not elaborated in the structure.

#### **1.4 Staffing**

A rapid assessment of the staffing levels of the district social service workforce, conducted by 4Children and the MGLSD in 2018, showed, for example, that only 49% of DCDO positions in 121 districts were filled. Furthermore, while 84% of the Senior PSWO positions had substantive appointments filled, most of these officers (51%) doubled as acting DCDOs in most districts, diminishing their functionality as Senior PSWOs due to the heavy workload. This situation has not changed, leading to the conclusion that the number of staff available to perform the probation and social welfare office is grossly inadequate. Due to understaffing, most staff are performing dual roles and duties beyond what is normally prescribed. Findings from the functional review show that 30% of the social service workforce cadres at the district and sub-county levels are not substantively appointed in their current positions, particularly at the DCDO level (50%) and the Labour Officer level (40%). A quarter of PSWOs are also working in an acting capacity.

#### **1.5 Job descriptions in relation to child protection**

The MoPS revised job descriptions for the local government workforce in 2016, and they are adequate in many ways. However, a detailed analysis revealed that there is little emphasis on child protection in most of the social service workforce job descriptions. For example, there is: 1) weak emphasis on child care and protection services in the job descriptions for community-based services sector leaders 2) a lack of adequate attention to the probation function within the Senior PSWO job description; 3) the total absence of a job description for the PSWO, implying that the Senior PSWO and PSWO share the same job description; and 4) a lack of emphasis on leadership and management responsibilities in the DCDO job description. The inadequacies in the job descriptions may have contributed to the poor

execution of statutory and court-related duties among Senior PSWOs and PSWOs, as captured in a recent study commissioned by the justice, law and order sector<sup>1</sup>.

The job elements for probation and social welfare services are reflected well in the PSWO Handbook (2018), which includes a strong focus on child protection, compared to the traditional roles contained in the MoPS job descriptions. In addition, the Children Act also provides guidance on the roles and functions within probation services. These documents should guide the revision of job descriptions in the future.

## **1.6 Qualifications and competencies**

The review showed a highly qualified workforce in terms of academic attainment, with 49 out of 56 social service workforce participants having a bachelor's degree, and 18 of these (32%) having master's-level training. However, there are gaps in the required competencies, as they tend to be rather generic and not well aligned to the mandates and roles of specific positions. Due to limited capacity-building initiatives, the social service workforce has not been adequately supported in developing job-specific practice competencies. Monitoring and evaluation, case management, and child protection-focused competencies are missing. These gaps are particularly apparent in the areas of child protection, especially in the social service workforce roles within the justice, law and order sector. The vague or generalist descriptions of ideal and required foundational qualifications exacerbate the low development of competencies. For example, the blanket description of the "arts/social sciences" qualification does not state which of the arts/social science disciplines is most appropriate to meet the current and emerging needs of the PSWO position. From the review's findings on the roles of the social service workforce, it is suggested that a degree that combines child protection and social welfare, e.g., in social work, social administration, child protection, or the equivalent, is ideal. For the CDO, social work and community development degrees are ideal, when supplemented with in-service training in various subjects, including child protection.

## **1.7 Work environment of the workforce**

There is an adequate and enabling legal and policy environment in which the social service workforce can function effectively in relation to child protection. However, workforce-specific legislation would be required to strengthen the recognition, ethical decision-making, accountability, and mutual support, as well as the continuous professional development of the workforce. The review also found that limited logistical, administrative, and technical resources impacted the social service workforce environment. Other factors include the following:

- **Organisational leadership and performance-based management:** Based on discussions and evidence derived from the consultative process, the MGLSD has demonstrated strength in technical leadership. However, there is need for strengthening the overall leadership competencies at all levels of the system. Performance management as a routine management function seems to be poorly received, such that this role goes largely unfulfilled. There are clear standards and tools for implementing a performance-based management system for the workforce, as they apply to the rest of the public service sector. The actual practice of performance-based management is affected by gaps in routine leadership and by the low implementation of rewards and sanctions.

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<sup>1</sup> Centre for Justice Studies and Innovation, 2015.

- **Organisational culture:** The findings suggest a mixed culture, in which individuals are driven by their personal motivation for service, while at the same time, little attention is paid to accountability and results.
- **Low visibility of child protection:** There is limited appreciation for and prioritisation of child protection in national and local government budgets and plans compared to other areas. This disparity reflects the low acknowledgement and prioritisation of child protection by local governments.
- **Extremely poor working environment:** There is a severe lack of workforce and child-friendly physical spaces, as well as a lack of basic tools and equipment, including computers, Internet access, and other communication equipment. These shortages compromise communication, reporting, access to information, routine office work, and the ethical provision of child-friendly and professional services.

### 1.8 Capacity development

To effectively operationalise and fulfil functions in line with the legal framework and other provisions, the MGLSD, the MoLG, and the MoPS have defined capacity development approaches that encompass different work-related trainings to meet current and future needs. The approach to capacity development follows traditional methods, including classroom seminars, workshops, and secondments. These approaches address knowledge and information needs, skills development, and behaviour changes. While these methods have been proven effective through years of application, other approaches associated with leadership, such as coaching, mentoring, and induction, are less frequently used in the current set-up of the social service workforce. Induction or orientation, especially for new entrants, is almost nonexistent among members of the social service workforce.

Regarding performance management as a source for identifying training needs, the MoPS has developed a set of tools, guidelines, and performance standards to aid in the process of planning and assessing performance. This process, with enhanced leadership, provides a more objective basis for developing a meaningful and sustainable staff development approach.

## 2. Conclusions

Based on the findings of this review, the following conclusions can be made:

1. There is role clarity and a shared understanding within and between ministries in the decentralised system. However, there are significant gaps in the actual execution of the roles. For example, it has been established that technical backstopping or support supervision is only provided to districts implementing projects. Furthermore, the dissemination of legal and policy documents, monitoring and evaluation functions, and coordination efforts remain weak.
2. The community-based services department structure under the local government is clear yet inadequate to support child care and protection services. The job descriptions do not cover all relevant functions for each cadre, and in the case of the PSWO, the entire job description is missing. In addition, the job descriptions provide the basic requirements for the different positions but miss out on key responsibilities, especially for the DCDO and senior-level positions, which do not adequately reflect leadership and managerial functions.
3. The social service workforce has the requisite basic academic qualifications in relevant fields of study. However, the person specifications do not reflect the comprehensive set of competencies that are relevant for the respective positions and functions.

4. In terms of numbers, there is not enough staff in the community-based services department to provide effective social services, including child protection services. This shortage is exacerbated by the fact that several job positions are not filled. Although there is no information on the workforce-to-population ratio, it is evident that members in the current workforce have very heavy caseloads.
5. Although a capacity-building strategy does exist for local governments, it has not been fully implemented, and as a result, most social service workforce cadres have not benefited from capacity development initiatives. In addition, capacity development has been narrowed to formal training sessions, while other approaches, such as, coaching and mentorship, and providing the workforce with adequate tools, have not been explored.
6. The social development sector has continued to suffer from inadequate funding. This shortage has affected the overall capacity of the sector to perform, as staffing and facilitation are both linked to funding.
7. The social service workforce is operating under very difficult circumstances, without adequate amenities and facilities, in an environment that is child-unfriendly.

### **3. General recommendations**

Some of the issues, especially those related to managing performance and promoting results-based accountability, could be addressed by strengthening leadership or supervisory roles across the hierarchy. The MGLSD should consider investing in a leadership development approach anchored in facilitation, coaching, and mentorship. The review makes the following recommendations with respect to planning, developing, and supporting the social service workforce.

#### ***Planning the social service workforce***

- To prepare for long-term staffing needs, the MGLSD should develop a medium- to long-term human resource acquisition strategy for the social service workforce, focusing on projected numbers and knowledge and skill requirements. The strategy should be based on trends analyses and should present clear categories of staff.

#### ***Developing the social service workforce***

- While capacity development strategies exist, a development strategy that goes beyond a five-year period is desirable. In the meantime, building on the recommended trainings and implementing them through in-service and other forms of training are suggested.
- A competency framework covering all social service workforce levels should be developed. This framework will also assist in focusing training and development on specific, not general, job requirements and in supporting continuous professional development efforts.
- The MGLSD should support the strengthening of efforts to professionalise the social service workforce and develop a code of ethics to aid in regulation of the practice.
- To make academic and professional training relevant to the circumstances of the time, the MGLSD should continue working with institutions of higher learning to ensure that curricula align with user needs and expectations.
- The MGLSD should develop a robust monitoring and evaluation system to provide quality performance parameters and support staff development efforts.

#### ***Supporting the social service workforce***

To support the social service workforce, the MGLSD should:

- Restructure the community-based services department and revise job descriptions to reflect the statutory and other core responsibilities of each position or work level (Suggested alternative structures are provided in the main report)
- Speed up harmonizing the multisectoral coordination mechanism and structures
- Provide logistical and administrative support to the social service workforce so it can meet legal and policy framework standards
- Continue lobbying for increased financial resources for social development, including for child protection,
- Lobby for child protection to be an assessment area for local governments
- Institute strong coordination mechanisms between the MoLG and the MGLSD.

# 1. Introduction and Background

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## 1.1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of the “**Functional review of the Government social service workforce in relation to children protection**”. The review was commissioned by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Coordinating Comprehensive Services for Children (4Children) Uganda Systems Strengthening project, which seeks to inform efforts geared towards strengthening the functionality of the social service workforce. The review was conducted between December 2018 and January 2019. This report presents the background and rationale for the functional review, the approach and methodology, key findings, and recommendations. The findings and recommendations will inform an action plan for strengthening the social service workforce to improve social service delivery and child protection.

## 1.2 Background to the functional review

Globally, there is increasing recognition of the importance of a well-functioning social welfare system in securing the protection, rights, and aspirations of children made vulnerable by a range of difficult life circumstances, such as poverty, HIV and AIDS, and other adversities. When the system functions effectively, families and children have access to an array of integrated, quality services that promote wellness and protection from harm<sup>2</sup>. As a critical element of the social welfare system, the social service workforce plays a critical role in ensuring that services are delivered effectively and that other components of the social welfare system function well. A strong, aligned, competent social service workforce is critical to child protection and child care reforms at all levels. The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (2017) describes such a workforce as comprising paid and unpaid, governmental and nongovernmental professionals and paraprofessionals working to ensure the healthy development and well-being of children and families. It includes civil society, government and community actors, professional and paraprofessional frontline workers, child protection officers, child and youth care workers, supervisors, managers, programme planners, local and national-level advocates, policy-makers, and educators. Allied professionals, paraprofessionals, and volunteers in sectors such as education, health, and justice also form a critical mass of the social service workforce, as they work to promote and protect the rights of marginalised groups, especially those of children.

In Uganda, social welfare and child protection are multisectoral issues that span different sectors and ministries, including, for example, those of health, education, justice, and agriculture, among others. However, the MGLSD has the primary mandate to spearhead and coordinate efforts towards child protection and the welfare of other vulnerable groups. In Uganda, social services are delivered within a decentralised system. At the local government level, the social development sector is represented by the community-based services department. According to the Local Governments Act (1997, as amended), local governments, including the district and lower local governments, have the primary responsibility to design and deliver services, including child protection services. To do this, they require not only high-level plans and strategies but also an adequate and competent workforce. There are different cadres of the social service workforce within the local government structures, including, for example, District Community Development Officers (DCDOs), Probation and Social Welfare Officers (PSWOs), Community Development Officers (CDOs), and Labour Officers. These

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<sup>2</sup> <http://ovcsupport.org/resource/social-service-workforce/>

cadres work with other allied staff and paraprofessionals, including the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) (who is the accounting officer within the district), members of the social services committee of the district councils, police, magistrates, parasocial workers, and other community volunteers, as well as social workers and programme administrators from nongovernmental implementing partners (IPs). The social service workforce continues to play critical roles in child protection, albeit in a fast-changing environment that makes their functions and mandates rather dynamic. Despite the changing landscape of child care and protection, the understanding and execution of the functions of the social service workforce involved in this sector, particularly those of the PSWO, has tended to remain rather static and traditional. Thus, social service workforce staff are not adequately responding to the current situation of children in need of protection. In 2018, the MGLSD identified three obstacles that PSWOs must overcome to strengthen social service workforce functions, and in particular, the probation and social welfare function: PSWOs' insufficient knowledge of strategies for responding to child abuse, their failure to adequately partner with key stakeholders in the fight against child abuse, and the dearth of resources in managing child abuse cases. Although these obstacles referenced PSWOs as a distinct cadre, it is not farfetched to state that these challenges apply to the rest of the social service workforce with regard to child protection.

### **1.3 About 4Children<sup>3</sup>**

4Children is a five-year, USAID-funded project implemented by a consortium of partners led by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), with partners, IntraHealth International, Maestral International, Pact, Plan International USA, and Westat. 4Children is designed to improve health and well-being outcomes for vulnerable children affected by HIV and AIDS and other adversities. In Uganda, 4Children is implementing the Uganda Systems Strengthening project. Through this project, 4Children aims to support and strengthen institutions by partnering effectively to improve the quality of life for children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS and other adversities. By fostering partnerships at the community level up to the national level, this project works towards three broad strategic objectives:

1. Ugandan institutions are strengthened to successfully plan, lead, and coordinate comprehensive services for children made vulnerable by HIV and other child protection risks.
2. Uganda's social service workforce is strengthened to deliver comprehensive services for children affected and/or infected by HIV and other adversities.
3. Ugandan institutions are strengthened to collect, analyze, and use data to improve planning, service delivery, and learning around social protection systems.

Through the functional review, 4Children aims to support the MGLSD and the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) in harmonising and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of PSWOs, DCDOs, CAOs, and sub-county CDOs. It is envisioned that this effort will enable the Government to streamline work, promote a more balanced level of effort, and support the more efficient use of resources in the delivery of services to families and communities.

### **1.4 Rationale for the functional review**

The landscape for providing services to vulnerable groups, and in particular, child protection services, has changed significantly over the last two decades. Emerging risks and increasing levels of vulnerability among children and other groups have overstretched the ability of the government and civil society to provide effective services. In response to this problem, several changes have been initiated in the legal and policy framework, programming, and service

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<sup>3</sup> Extracted from the scope of work



delivery. There is a growing attention towards social protection, as well as harmonising and strengthening orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) programming for the effective care and protection of children. All of these reforms require a critical review of the functional structure through which services are designed and delivered.

Workforce strengthening, including proper planning, development, and support, ensures that the social development sector can fulfil its mandate by “having the right people with the right skills and competencies in the right places at the right times.”<sup>4</sup> Yet, significant gaps still exist with regard to Uganda’s social service workforce for child protection. The Social Development Sector Plan (SDSP) (MGLSD 2016) identified a 56% staffing gap at the Ministry level, and although the local government staffing levels and gaps are not specified, the Ministry acknowledges that there is

*“a challenge of amalgamation of functions above at the LGs [local governments] level to the extent that some functions are subsumed under others which lead to ineffective service delivery. This demands for an officer with multiple competencies to handle all the above functions. Besides, certain functions like probation and labour require specialised competencies as stipulated in the probation and labour Acts. Local Governments also encounter high staff attrition rate as Community Development Officers are designated as Sub County Chiefs without replacements and lack promotional avenues” (pg. 40).*

At the same time, there is inadequate information regarding the workforce, particularly at the district and lower local government levels. There appears to be no robust system for forecasting human resource requirements based on the population needs and demands of different vulnerable groups, including those of children. Based on a review of job descriptions and specifications prepared by the Ministry of Public Service (MoPS) for local governments, the skillsets, competencies, and relevant qualifications of specific cadres of the social service workforce have not been clearly defined. This issue is coupled with a lack of clarity regarding the roles of different cadres, including PSWOs and CDOs, who play multiple and sometimes competing statutory and non-statutory roles. Systems for management support supervision also require streamlining. No mechanism exists to prepare managers at the different levels for their supervisory roles.

Understanding the current social service workforce should enable the MGLSD, the MoLG, and other stakeholders to effectively plan for the recruitment, training, deployment, and retention of social service workers to meet the protection and welfare needs of children. The review will provide an opportunity for the Government (the MGLSD, the MoLG, and the MoPS) to reflect on critical aspects of the functional structure of the social services, and of the workforce structure in particular, to determine the structure’s suitability. Furthermore, the review will enable the Government to make informed decisions and take action to streamline the roles and responsibilities embedded in each function and job category, the competencies necessary to fulfil the roles, and the training requirements. Lastly, there is an opportunity to create a supportive environment in which members of the social service workforce can effectively fulfil their different roles and responsibilities, particularly those related to child protection.

## **1.5 Purpose and objectives**

The purpose of the functional review was to support the MGLSD (the Directorate of Social Protection) and the MoLG (the Directorate of Local Government Inspection) in harmonising and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of PSWOs, DCDOs, CAOs, and sub-county CDOs. The following elements were included in the review:

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<sup>4</sup> CPS, Human Resource Services, 2011:3

1. Skills inventory of the workforce (including the roles, responsibilities, qualifications, and staffing levels of district social service workforce staff)
2. Performance-based management standards and processes (including systems, procedures, culture, and norms)
3. Capacity-strengthening needs and strategies for workforce development
4. Supervision of the workforce at the local government and ministry levels and workforce supervision responsibilities
5. Communication and coordination (i.e., with systems, procedures, culture, and norms) with the MGLSD, the MoLG, local governments, other ministries, development partners, and other key stakeholders, including the police; the judiciary; the political wing, including for instance, the local council chairperson and the vice chairperson at all levels; the secretary to the social service council; and nongovernmental organisations
6. Organisational environment of the workforce.

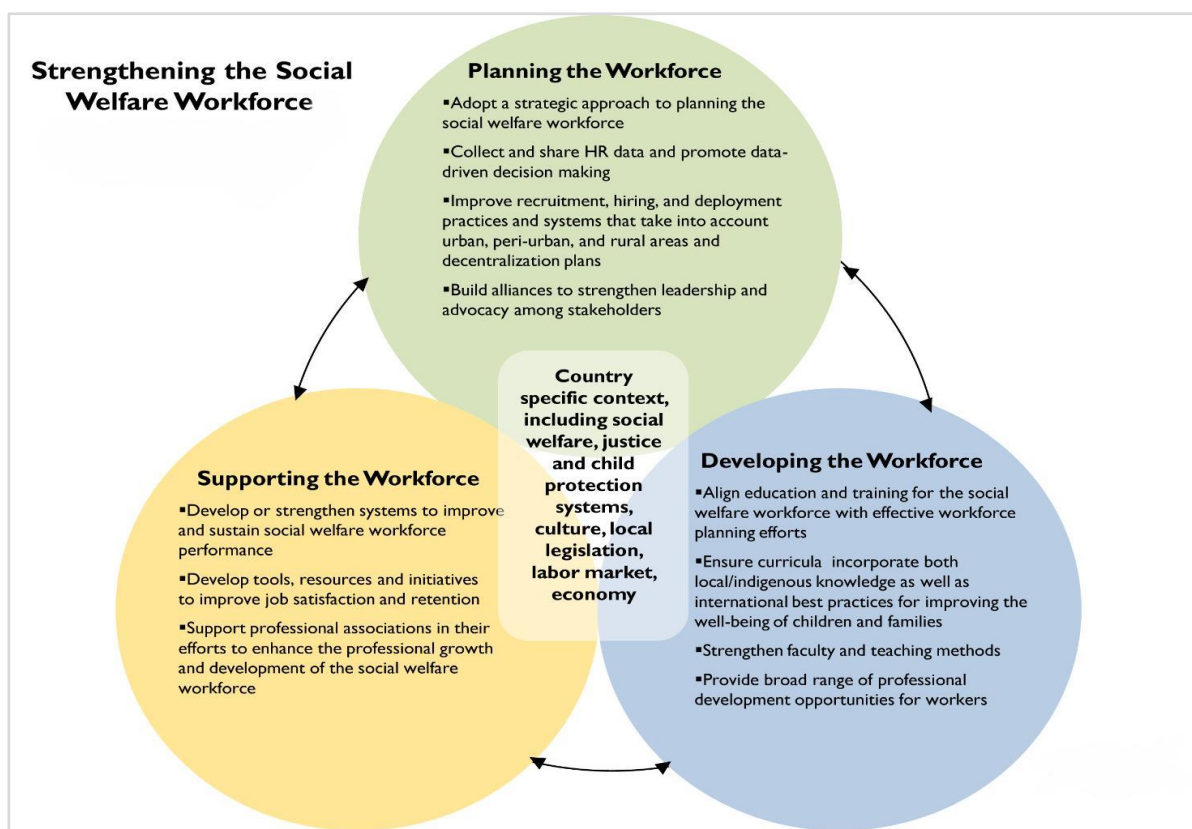
Specific activities were to:

1. Conduct a desk review of MoLG job descriptions and qualifications prepared by the MoPS, performance standards, and existing training plans to identify current gaps and possible solutions
2. Hold national-level consultations with the MGLSD and the MoLG to identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities within the functional structure of the MGLSD/MoLG social service workforce
3. Conduct a skills audit and identify the capacity-strengthening needs of local government staff in selected districts, ascertaining their challenges and workforce development needs and suggesting improvements
4. Analyze how the workforce coordinates with other actors and institutions and provide recommendations on how to improve coordination and work relations, as needed
5. Work with the technical working group (TWG) to develop a roadmap or action plan and make recommendations for improving the performance of the social service workforce to meet the demand for improved service delivery in relation to child protection.

## 1.6 Conceptual model

The social service workforce strengthening framework, developed by the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (USAID 2010), is instructive in analyzing current social service workforce challenges and in developing action plans to strengthen the workforce in relation to child protection. The social service workforce strengthening framework situates workforce strengthening within three interrelated components, namely, planning, developing, and supporting the workforce, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Social service (welfare) workforce strengthening model**



Source: USAID, 2010

The framework postulates that when the workforce is well-planned, well-trained, and well-supported, it will be better able to address the needs and enhance the resources of vulnerable children and families. Thorough planning is critical for identifying the human resource needs and current gaps and for guiding decisions regarding the proper recruitment and deployment of the workforce. To develop the workforce, appropriate education and training are essential. Therefore, there must be a deliberate plan to work with training institutions to collaboratively develop appropriate curricula that meet the needs and demands of the social service sector, ensuring that effective pedagogy is adopted. Pre- and in-service training, as well as continuous professional development, are required. Workforce strengthening further requires continuous support through the creation of an enabling legal and policy framework, effective supervision mechanisms, and other strategies that ensure a highly motivated and productive workforce. Professional associations play an essential support and protection role for the social service workforce. The above framework thus provides a simplified model for reviewing the status quo and for identifying gaps, priority issues, and actions required to strengthen the social service workforce within local government structures to ensure effective child protection services.

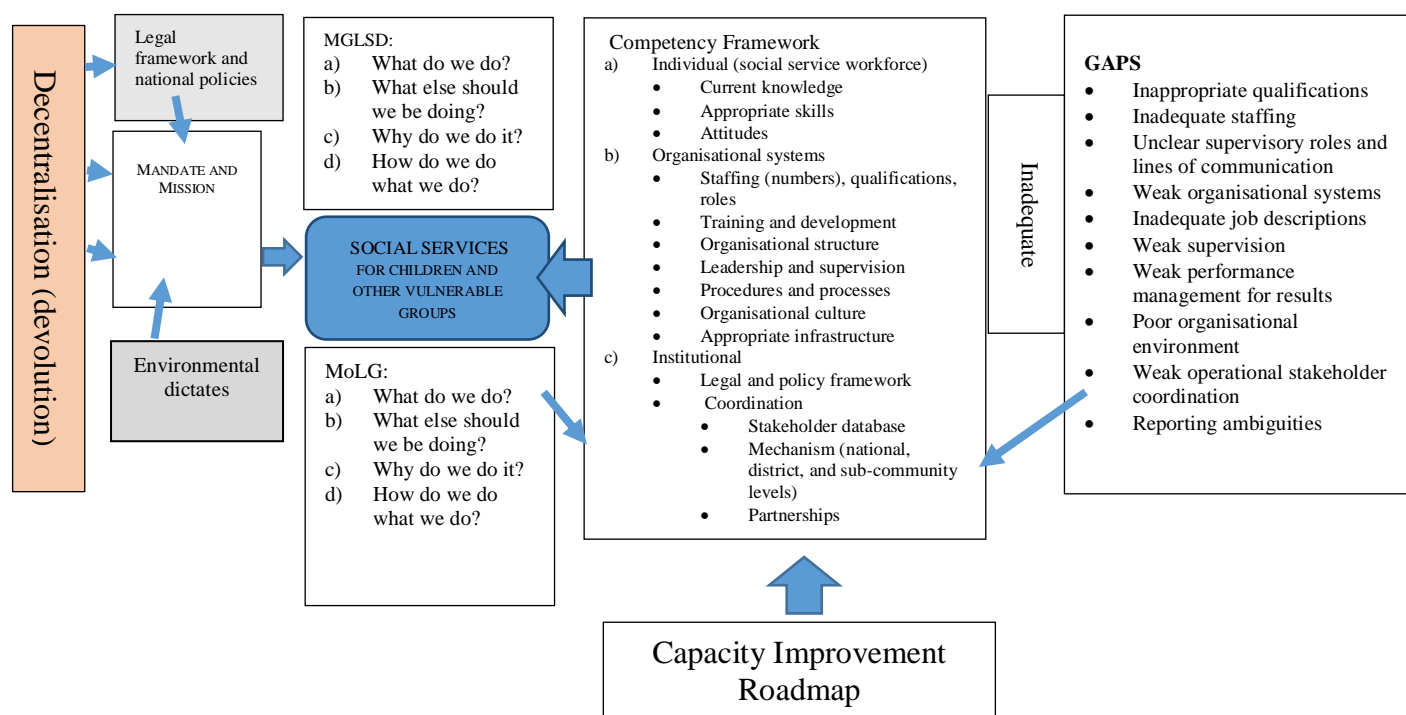
## 2. Approach and Methodology

The functional review adopted a participatory and consultative process by engaging staff at the national, district, and sub-county levels through a variety of activities. This engagement was vital to ensure buy-in and ownership of the process and more importantly, outcomes of the exercise. Organisational development principles were used to ensure that the process also acted as an intervention through a *process consultation* model. The review and analysis were undertaken within the framework of decentralisation. The process was led by a TWG composed of members from the MGLSD, the MoLG, the MoPS, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), 4Children, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The TWG was supported by a team of two consultants in conducting the review. The purpose, objectives, approach, and methodology for the review were discussed and reviewed through a series of meetings between the TWG and the consultants. An inception meeting to clarify the approach and methods was held prior to the field-based consultations. The conceptual and methodological approaches are elaborated below.

### 2.1 Analytical framework

The framework for the analysis was constructed on the premise that a thorough functional analysis would be key to the other components of the review. The detailed breakdown of the mandates and missions of the two core ministries in relation to child care and protection was at the centre of the analysis. In particular, clarity was sought regarding whether the mandates had been affected by environmental dictates and/or the legal and policy framework in general, and more specifically, by the Probation Act and Children Act, as well as by any relevant international and regional conventions on the rights of children. This understanding provided a basis for further analysis in terms of what is required, as standard practices, to deliver social services, especially those related to child care and protection. The findings from this analysis were then compared with the current landscape to identify any gaps, including gaps in the roles and responsibilities of the social service workforce. This framework is depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Analytical framework



## 2.2 Scope of the review

In terms of content, the review covered all areas essential to understanding the functional structure and current situation of the social service workforce—staff establishment, the available workforce in the community-based services department, qualifications, competencies, and job descriptions—to identify opportunities and gaps in relation to child protection. Other aspects covered included: coordination and communication mechanisms, supervision, performance-based management, and the organisational environment. While the social service workforce comprises many cadres, including both government and nongovernmental, and paid and unpaid workers, this review was limited to the government workforce and specifically the community-based services department at the district and sub-county levels. Informal social service workforce cadres, such as parasocial workers, were not included in the review, as the critical roles they play in child protection at the community level are commonly acknowledged. The review was also limited to the technical workforce (those in the civil service) and excluded members of the political wing, such as the district or sub-county councilors and others involved in the political leadership of the social service system.

The geographical scope of the review was nationwide in terms of the general analysis, but consultations were limited to a carefully selected sample of 25 district local governments. The districts were selected based on their geographical location (regions), their longevity as established local governments, and their perceived performance in social service delivery. This selection ensured a mix of ‘old’ and ‘new’ districts, as well as relatively accessible and ‘hard-to-reach’ districts, as these factors (location, longevity, and performance) might influence the functionality of the social service workforce.

## 2.3 Study participants

Participants in the regional consultative workshops were drawn from 25 districts and included: select staff of the community-based services departments in the districts, Human Resource Managers, the CAO, Remand Home Managers, Community Service Coordinators, Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) staff, and Magistrates. Four regional workshops were held in Wakiso (Central district), Mbarara (Western district), Mbale (Eastern district), and Lira (Northern district). A total of 134 participants attended the workshops, while 27 key informants from a pool of national and local government stakeholders were interviewed.

## 2.4 Data collection methods

The study involved two major components: a desk review and field-based consultations.

### 2.4.1 Desk review

During the inception stage, a comprehensive review of existing literature on the social service workforce was conducted. Key reviewed aspects included: the legal and policy framework, the structure of social services, job descriptions and functions of social services workers within local governments, staffing levels and qualifications, and performance-based management systems. While the focus was on Uganda, relevant global and regional literature was reviewed to provide a broader context for benchmarking and interpreting the results of the functional review.

### 2.4.2 Field-based consultations

This phase involved three activities: a functional analysis meeting, national-level key informant interviews, and regional consultative workshops.

#### **a) Functional analysis meeting with the TWG**

A half-day meeting involving the TWG was held to thoroughly review the mandates of the core ministries. The objectives were to: 1) reveal any strengths and discrepancies in the current structural/functional arrangements of the MGLSD, the MoLG, and the MoPS and identify areas



of potential conflict or duplication in roles and responsibilities; 2) identify any missing functions in the current set-up, based on the legal and policy framework analysis; and 3) clarify the mandates of key stakeholders in general and those directly related to child protection service delivery.

#### ***b) National-level key informant interviews***

Detailed interviews were conducted with selected representatives of major stakeholders in social service delivery, particularly in relation to child protection services. Officials were selected from the MGLSD; the MoLG; the MoPS; the MIA; the justice, law and order sector; the Secretariat, the Uganda Police Force (UPF, the Criminal Investigations Department and CFPU); Uganda prisons; and from other key stakeholders, including UNICEF, United Nations (UN) Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Uganda Child Protection Working Group. To further elaborate on the mandates, the national-level consultations also sought to explore current trends and practices, key emerging child rights issues and priorities, and the institutional legal and policy framework. The impacts of this framework on the social service workforce in general, and, on the district and sub-county level social service workforce, were also explored. The interviews were guided by open-ended questions developed in line with the major themes of the functional review.

#### ***c) Regional consultative workshops***

Four regional workshops were conducted, enlisting participation from 25 districts. A mix of cadres from the district and sub-county levels participated in the workshops. Besides the staff of the community-based services department, who were the major focus of the review, a representative sample of participants was drawn from other key sectors that directly interact with community-based services department staff in social service delivery regarding child protection. Hence, a typical participant list included PSWOs, DCDOs, Principal Community Development Officers (PCDOs), Senior CDOs, CDOs, Senior SPWOs, the CAO, district Human Resource Managers, Magistrates, Community Service Coordinators, heads of remand homes, and representatives of civil society organisations. Development partners such as UNICEF, UN Women, and UNFPA participated in the regional workshops as well. Members of the TWG and a team of consultants moderated the workshops. During the workshops, data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire for staff of the community-based services department, while guided interviews were conducted with different cadres of the social service workforce, including those in leadership and management positions (i.e., CAOs, Community Service Coordinators, and Human Resource Managers), PSWOs, and CDOs. The purpose of the individual questionnaire was to gather data on the individual characteristics of the cadres, including their qualifications, interpretations of their own mandates and functions, training needs, and individual perceptions of work culture and performance-based management. Conversely, the group discussions formed the major approach to data collection in as far as assessing the functionality of the social service workforce. Besides collecting data, the group and plenary discussions were designed to facilitate mutual learning among members of the social service workforce.

## **2.5 Analysis of findings**

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected during the exercise. A thematic analysis approach was adopted to analyze the data collected through the group meetings, interviews, and workshops. All responses were transcribed verbatim to ensure their completeness and to minimise any possibilities for misrepresentation. The themes were synthesised to identify critical issues and gaps in the functional structure of the social service workforce. A combination of manual and computer-assisted analysis using NVivo was undertaken. Major codes (themes) aligned very well with the key objectives of the functional review and included the legal and policy framework; qualifications, skills, and competencies of the social service workforce; coordination; communication and reporting; supervision and technical

backstopping mechanisms; performance-based management; and organisational environment (including work culture).

Quantitative data captured through the self-assessment questionnaire were analyzed at descriptive and bivariate levels using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS, version 25). A preliminary review of the questionnaires was performed to identify errors and omissions and to do a final coding of open-ended questions and of any other new responses. The data were disaggregated by job position in the social service workforce. Data from different sources were integrated into the presentation and discussion of findings.

## **2.6 Reporting**

A draft report was subjected to a validation process to ensure it responded to the Terms of Reference and was representative of what was gathered in the field. A final report of the analysis, key findings, and recommendations was produced, which considered the feedback and critique from the validation meeting.

## **2.7 Study limitations**

One of the key limitations of the study is that the review process was limited to the technical wing of the local government, thus excluding the political wing, including the district, sub-county, and community local councils. These actors play a vital role not only in determining the effectiveness of service delivery in general but also in mobilising, allocating, and prioritising resources for the different sectors. The respective councils also have direct responsibilities for child care and protection and have focal persons responsible for this function, i.e., the Secretaries for children. The review team was aware of this limitation from the start, but due to resource constraints, the review was redesigned to address the technical components of the social service workforce system.

Another limitation relates to the small sample size of the social service workforce cadres. Although the sample provided adequate data for qualitative analysis, the quantitative analysis was affected by the relatively small sample of 56 social service workforce cadres across the participating districts. To minimise the impact of this limitation, recent secondary data were used to augment the findings.

The third limitation was relatively low participation. Of the 25 districts covered, only 11 submitted the required data on human resources strength, qualifications, and budgets. Furthermore, only two districts submitted workplans. However, the consultants minimised the effect of this limitation by referring to data available on the Internet.

### 3. Roles and Functions Analysis

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The role analysis technique was used to examine the extent to which the key ministries responsible for leading child care and protection interventions fulfil their statutory roles. The mandates and roles of the MGLSD, the MoLG, the MoPS, and justice, law and order sector institutions are presented. Given that the mandates and roles of each of the key players are provided in various legal and policy documents, the analysis emphasised how well these roles and functions are being executed and identified any gaps and potential areas of functional conflicts.

#### 3.1 Decentralisation system

The Government of Uganda has been pursuing a major decentralisation programme since the late 1980s. Its choice of devolution entails a transfer of powers, functions, and services from the central government to local councils. One such group of decentralised services is that of community-based services, which include child protection services. According to the Local Governments Act (1997, as amended), local governments, i.e., districts, urban authorities, and lower local governments, have the primary responsibility of delivering social services, including child protection services. Under the decentralised system, the roles of the central government are to: provide oversight; formulate policies and initiate changes in the regulatory framework; build the capacity<sup>5</sup> for service delivery; coordinate stakeholders towards multisectoral responses to a development agenda; mobilise resources; develop standards and guidelines for professional guidance (support supervision) and criteria for the quality of service delivery; and monitor and evaluate programme implementation. While the MoLG assumes similar roles regarding local government administration, it is also responsible for operational oversight and is accountable for output-level results of the community-based services; it enforces rules and regulations; it delivers services to citizens; and it provides feedback and reporting on programme performance to the national level for purposes of influencing or initiating policy changes. It is therefore crucial that there is a clear understanding of the demarcation of roles, functions, and authority between central and service delivery points to avoid misunderstandings and artificial gaps in service delivery.

#### 3.2 Mandates and roles<sup>6</sup>

In relation to the social service workforce and to child care and protection, the MGLSD, local governments, and justice, law and order sector institutions have a direct responsibility for child care and protection outcomes, while the MoPS manages human resources and develops policies and guidelines for all aspects of human capital management and utilisation.

##### 3.2.1 Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

The mandate of the MGLSD is to empower citizens to maximise individual and collective potential by developing skills and increasing labour productivity and cultural enrichment to

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<sup>5</sup> The UN Development Programme (UNDP) has defined “capacity” as “the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner.” According to the National Local Government Capacity Building Policy, capacity-building is considered in the broader, holistic sense of encompassing all the factors that have a bearing on the performance of local governments as institutions and on its stakeholders.

<sup>6</sup> <https://publicservice.go.ug/>; <https://www.molg.go.ug/>; <https://www.jlos.go.ug/>



achieve sustainable and gender-sensitive development. With regard to child protection, the mandate of the MGLSD includes the following:

- Protecting the vulnerable from deprivation and livelihood risks
- Increasing access to equal opportunities and enhancing equity and protection
- Safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups.

In fulfilling its child protection mandate, the MGLSD: formulates social policy; issues standards of care and guidelines; develops appropriate responses to child protection; provides advocacy and networking; undertakes supervisory visits (backstopping); mobilises resources for vulnerable group projects; carries out monitoring and evaluation; provides training and development opportunities; supports children in conflict with the law; strengthens family institutions; and builds community capacity to demand and increase the uptake of services.

### 3.2.2 Ministry of Local Government

The mandate of the MoLG is to guide, harmonise, mentor, and advocate for all local governments in support of the governmental vision to bring about the socioeconomic transformation of the country. Regarding child protection, the MoLG, through local government structures, is responsible for community-based service delivery, including social welfare, community development, and probation services. Its central role in child protection is reflected in local governance administration and inspections. The MoLG has line management responsibility for community-based departments, over which the respective technical ministries, including the MGLSD, have content/technical responsibilities. The two local government functions relevant to this study, i.e., the functions related to strengthening the social service workforce, are those of administration and inspections. Administration involves promoting democratic governance, advocacy, and transparency in local government for efficient and effective service delivery, while inspections ensure adherence to the established legal and policy framework, and to regulations, procedures, and rules for efficient and effective local government operations.

The allocation of policy formulation and technical leadership to the MGLSD and service delivery responsibilities to local government may be a source of concern operationally, as it seems to create more than one centre of power. This relationship should be understood from the perspective of a decentralised system, and if not well-managed, it can undermine service delivery capacity.

### 3.2.3 Justice, Law and Order Sector

The justice, law and order sector brings over 18 institutions responsible for administering justice, maintaining law and order, and promoting the observance of human rights. It serves as a coordinating mechanism that enhances access to justice for vulnerable groups, including children. In relation to child care and protection, the justice, law and order sector focuses on strengthening justice for children. In this arrangement, the different institutions or actors can ensure that children have timely and complete access to justice and can increase visibility of children's issues.

### 3.2.4 Ministry of Public Service

The mandate of the MoPS is to develop, manage, and administer human resource policies, management systems, procedures, and structures for the public service to facilitate effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery. It delivers on its mandate through the provision of human resources, compensation, planning and development, and performance management. It also has a management services function through which it delivers organisational designs, job descriptions and person specifications, workload assessments,

and schemes of service. Another key task is conducting innovative, operational research to generate evidence for the development of policy and operational guidelines.

### 3.3 Performance analysis

The performance analysis was considered from an organisational and technical leadership perspective, as expected of both line and functional ministries. Based on the roles discussed above, the MGLSD, the MoLG, the MoPS, and justice, law and order sector institutions have shared responsibilities for planning, developing, and supporting the social service workforce. The interest in child protection is therefore entrenched in how they execute their respective roles. While roles and functions in the decentralised system are well articulated at both the national and community-based services departmental levels, in terms of execution, this consultancy came to several conclusions, which are outlined below.

#### 3.3.1 Oversight role

The key players involved in child care and protection services have provided strategic frameworks in which national priorities for child protection are set out. In these frameworks, the government has established clear agendas for improving responses to vulnerable and marginalised groups. The strategic directions for improving human resources for the social development sector are well articulated in these plans. For example, the SDSP (MGLSD 2016), developed through an extensive consultative process, lays out a strong mission: *“empowering communities, particularly, vulnerable and marginalised groups for wealth creation and inclusive development.”* To achieve this goal, institutional development, i.e., improving the performance of social development sector institutions, is a key priority theme for the strategic period (2015/2016 to 2019/2020). Within this theme, strengthening and developing human resources for the social development sector was marked as a national priority.

The justice, law and order sector also laid out clear strategies for prioritising the promotion and protection of child rights by strengthening justice for children. The sector has emphasised systems, infrastructure development, and human resource capacities for creating spaces and a child-friendly environment under its strategic intervention: *“enhance efficiency and effectiveness of justice sector institutions.”* (JLOS, 2017:38) The plan further prioritises leadership, staffing, and human resource development as key areas for intervention. According to its Annual Performance Report 2017/18, the justice, law and order sector is on track and has improved on its 2016/17 targets, showing, for example a 1.3% increase on one of its justice for children performance indicators. This result is a testament to justice, law and order sector institutions’ focus on their vision of improving access to justice for children.

In both cases, projected targets acted as ‘end point’ motivators, and descriptions of desired results for strategic periods were developed. The development of the Strategic Sector Plans demonstrates the extent to which one aspect of the oversight role—articulating vision and trajectory—has been filled. The question to answer is how well these plans have been followed and acted upon.

It has been noted that while both documents recognise the increase in child protection issues, the plans have not provided long-term human resource needs in terms of recruitment or development planning. For example, there is no disaggregated data for the anticipated growth of the social service workforce by position, i.e., PSWOs, CDOs, etc.

#### 3.3.2 Legal and policy framework

The MGLSD and justice, law and order sector institutions have been at the forefront of reforming the legal and policy environment for social development and increasing access to justice for children. This commitment is demonstrated through the formulation of new laws, bills, and statutes, as well as amendments to existing ones, including: the Children Act (2016,

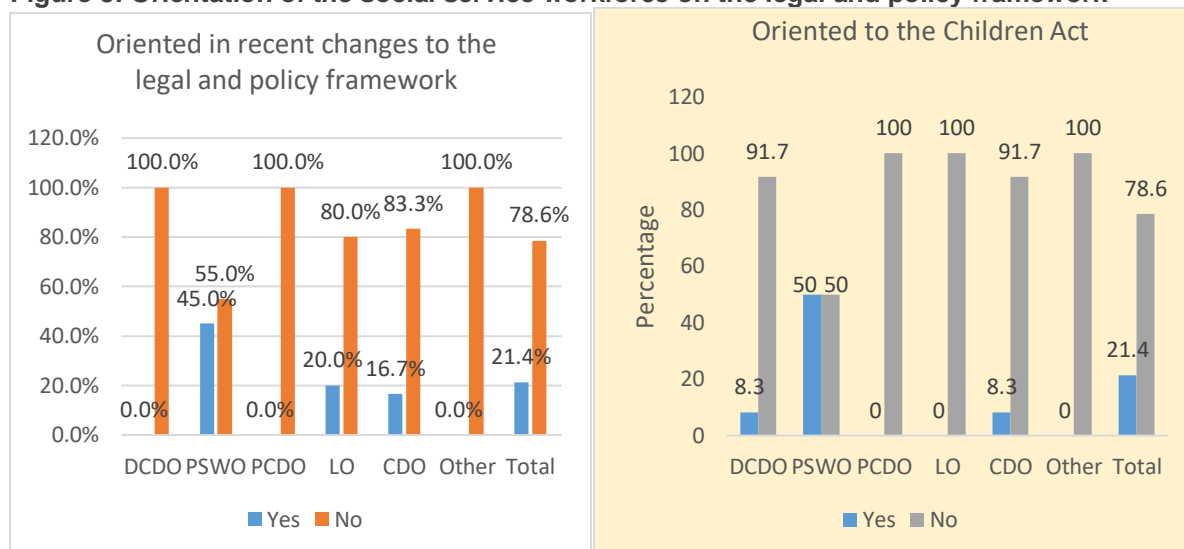
as amended); the Children (Approved Homes) Rules, 2013, Statutory Instruments Supplement No. 30, S.I. No. 52; the National Alternative Care Framework, 2012; the National Action Plan for Children with Disabilities 2016/17–2020/21; and others. The MGLSD, in the process of developing regulations to operationalise the Children Act (2016, as amended), noted some gaps, inconsistencies, and conflicts in the law and has embarked on a process of further amendments to the amended Act. Parenting guidelines have been drafted but have not been disseminated yet.

The MoPS has also performed its function of providing human resources policies, systems, and guidelines. It follows up to ensure that these policies and regulations are adhered to in practice. The MoPS has also been responsive in addressing systems concerns regarding performance management. A typical example is the Rewards and Sanctions Framework, which was developed as a response to concerns raised by staff on the weaknesses of the system. It also responded to concerns regarding the staffing levels in the initial structure of community-based services departments by adding one more position to the structure, namely, the PSWO position.

However, the MGLSD has not been consistent in disseminating relevant policies, laws, statutes, regulations, and guidelines to community-based services departments, which in turn facilitate their dissemination to communities. Based on the covered sample, only 21.4% of the workforce has received orientation in relevant laws and policies, while 78.6% have not. It is of concern that 44 out of 56 officers, representing the 25 local government structures covered in this study, had not been oriented on the Children Act (2016, as amended). As further illustrated in Figure 3, most key positions with child care and protection responsibilities reported not being oriented to the Children Act (2016, as amended). However, according to 4Children, the MGLSD was supported in disseminating the Children Act to 123 DCDOs and Senior PSWOs in March 2018. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the 44 officers covered in this study were not part of the 123. However, the Ministry needs to improve its efforts to ensure that all positions with child protection responsibilities are oriented to the Children Act (2016, as amended).

Participants in consultative meetings also alleged that the MGLSD has not provided enough copies of the laws and policies and that the absence of simplified and translated copies constrains their proper application, especially at the lower local government and community levels. According to 4Children, the MGLSD has been supported to consolidate and simplify the Children Act (Cap. 59), and 2,000 copies are planned to be printed and distributed by the end of April 2019, with at least 15 copies to be distributed per district. In the opinion of community-based services department staff, the lack of a simplified version of the Children Act (2016, as amended) has limited community awareness of the Act. However, while developing regulations for implementing the amended Children Act, the MGLSD identified inconsistencies and gaps that should be addressed before intensifying the development of regulations.

**Figure 3: Orientation of the social service workforce on the legal and policy framework**



In relation to the MoPS, the MGLSD/MoLG have been proactive in responding to recruitment needs for child protection by adding a PSWO position to the community-based services structure and by upgrading the CDO position from the Assistant Community Development Officer position at the sub-county level to enable the recruitment of better qualified staff (i.e., staff with a bachelor's degree). However, the MoPS could have used its operational research capabilities to ascertain workload and generate evidence-based information on future requirements for the social service workforce at different work levels, especially at the PWSO and CDO levels. Additions to the workforce should be based on anticipated increases in service demand levels and to the changing service landscape, which may affect the required numbers, qualifications, skills, and competencies of those staff. Currently, there is no report on the social service workforce human resource projections for the medium- and long-term planning of specialised services, such as child protection.

### 3.3.3 Resource mobilisation

There is a general tendency to limit resource mobilisation to financial aspects, thus overlooking other resources, such as volunteer and logistical support. Another common view is that ministries can only raise financial resources within Government-approved modalities, including budgeting and bilateral and multilateral arrangements. The functional review revealed that most financial resources are mobilised through national budgets.

The resources raised through national budgets are too meagre to support the realisation of workplans for the community-based services department and for probation and social welfare services. As an example, a summary budget analysis of 23 of the districts that participated in the review showed a meagre 0.1% of the total local government budget and 5% of the community-based services department budget being allocated to probation and social welfare (Table 1).

**Table 1: Summary local government budget analysis in relation to child protection**

Cumulative receipts by end of March for FY 2017/18 UGX					
No. of Districts	Cumulative Receipts by End of March for FY 2017/18	Community-based Services	Probation and Social Welfare		
			Actual	% of total local government budget	As % community-based services
23 districts	455,832,975	13,093,839	655,291	0.14%	5.00%

A further analysis of the approved budget for Pader District for FY 2017/2018 showed that out of a total budget of UGX 19,192,595,000, only 1,328,938,000 was allocated to the community-based services department. The probation and social welfare function received only 10,699,000 in March 2018. This figure constitutes 0.81% of the total community-based services department budget. In the SDSP, it was projected that by the end of the strategic period, in 2020, the social development sector share of the national budget would increase from 0.44% to 2%. This is a fair projection, yet current release levels do not indicate any increase in the national budget share for the social development sector.

While all ministries seem to have limited control over final budget allocations, at the local level, the law<sup>7</sup> provides for unconditional and conditional grants to be given to local governments to run decentralised services and programmes, which are agreed upon between national and local governments. The study found that the community-based services department is a beneficiary of unconditional grants. About 55.4% of the respondents acknowledged benefitting from the grants in general, with 17.9% of the grants going to probation and social welfare services. This result shows a level of commitment on the part of local government to raise much-needed resources for the community-based services department, and for child protection services in particular.

There is no evidence to suggest that volunteer organisations are being engaged to provide human resources, despite the enormous interest in child care and protection services at the global level. Similarly, there was no evidence relating to the extent to which the MGLSD and local governments raise virements, i.e., unutilised resources redirected to new priorities based on needs, such as addressing child trafficking or children living in or in contact with the streets. However, the MGLSD is continuously engaging the Government on the need to increase budget allocations, especially to address issues such as the growing increase of children on the street.

### 3.3.4 Capacity-building

The MGLSD's 2015–2020 SDSP projected that the number of staff to be trained in technical skills (and presumably in child protection, too) over the strategic period would increase from a baseline of 110 to 450 in Year Five, i.e., in 2019/20. The cost of training was estimated to increase from UGX 1,250,000 to 5,000,000 in the same period. This training would cover all staff at different levels. This study established that in-service and other trainings relevant to child care and protection have been provided to some cadres, especially to PSWOs, where 50% have received short-term training in child protection. However, based on participant responses, 57.1% of the community-based services department staff have not received any in-service training in the past five years. As will be elaborated in the next chapter on the situation analysis, justice for children, and in general, the legal aspects of child protection, are an underrepresented area in capacity-building: only 19% of those who had received any in-service training had been exposed to this area. The MGLSD needs to increase its commitment to building capacity in the technical areas of child protection and in related subjects.

The MoLG has an elaborate capacity-building strategy,<sup>8</sup> in which generic training areas and methods for achieving training goals are articulated. However, there are no mentions of social service workforce-related trainings, either generic or specific to child protection, in its schedule of trainings. Gender awareness and community participation are mentioned specifically as areas for capacity-building, but child protection is not. It is important that child protection also receives the same 'assessment area' status as do gender and community awareness. On a positive note, training in leadership and management is included in the generic trainings;

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<sup>7</sup> The Local Governments Act, Part VIII, 83 (3)

<sup>8</sup> National Local Government Capacity Building Policy (Undated) Draft

however, the extent to which the training is provided to the social service workforce at the district level still needs to be ascertained.

As part of overall capacity-building, it was revealed during the series of workshops that local governments have not provided adequate logistics, tools, or child-friendly environments in most locations. Of the 56 respondents, 96.4% indicated poor or inadequate provision of logistical and physical infrastructure by the local government. Of this number, the DCDOs, PSWOs, and CDOs were the most affected by poor or absent logistical and other support services. Consultations revealed that sometimes PSWOs and CDOs have to use their personal resources for communication and transport, and in some cases, they procure services such as health care from their meagre salaries, so they may continue to extend services to children and families. Most community-based services department staff work in inadequate buildings that provide no special rooms for officers to interact with service users, a violation of the principles of privacy, confidentiality, and the provision of child-friendly services. While some officers may have motorcycles for transport, the analysis of local government budgets showed no allocation to probation services for fuel. It is reasonable to conclude that local governments have lagged in terms of providing logistical and other administrative support to the social service workforce for staff to be effective in their duties.

### 3.3.5 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is a crucial function in any undertaking, as it plays a pivotal role in providing feedback crucial to influencing policy and programme changes. This concept is also recognised in the SDSP, in which actions towards monitoring and evaluation system development and installation have been outlined. While monitoring and evaluation as a routine management function has been highlighted in job descriptions, and while the MGLSD plans for the activity on a quarterly basis, the actual realisation of this activity is tied to the available resource envelope. The absence of a monitoring and evaluation system and inadequate allocation of resources to this function have compromised the capacity of the MGLSD to effectively and comprehensively fulfil its monitoring and evaluation role. In relation to the social service workforce and child protection, the absence of a monitoring and evaluation system affects evidence-based planning, compromises quality assurance, limits feedback on what is working and what is not, limits the extent to which regulations and standards are adhered to, and denies social service workforce data/information for improving responses to child care and protection.

As part of strengthening the monitoring and evaluation function, the MGLSD is currently developing a single registry system for social protection. This undertaking is a positive indication that the MGLSD is responding to urgent data management needs for guiding evidence-based decision-making and programming. However, the single registry system would not capture qualitative evidence, such as success stories and best practices in child protection at the community level, which is relevant for outcome and impact assessment.

### 3.3.6 Support supervision

Support supervision visits are considered part of the monitoring and evaluation process. These visits are expected to cover mentorship, coaching, orientation, and other forms of support. A discussion around central-level workplans revealed that these visits are planned for on a quarterly basis. However, the MGLSD experiences resource constraints in fulfilling the visitation calendar. The study revealed that 60.7% of the respondents received support supervision, with 39.3% indicating irregular and insufficient supervisions. It is positive to note that the DCDOs, PSWOs, and CDOs indicated receiving more visits, especially in the last three months (October, November, and December 2018), as shown in Table 2.



**Table 2: The proportion of the social service workforce who report support supervision from the line ministry**

<b>Do you receive regular support supervision from the line ministry?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
District Community Development Officer (n=12)	66.7%	33.3%
Probation and Social Welfare Officer (n=20)	55.0%	45.0%
Principal Community Development Officer (n=5)	100.0%	0.0%
Labour Officer (n=5)	60.0%	40.0%
Community Development Officer (n=12)	50.0%	50.0%
Others (n=1)	50.0%	50.0%
<b>Total (n=56)</b>	<b>60.7%</b>	<b>39.3%</b>

During role analysis sessions with the TWG, as well as in interviews with MGLSD officials, it was clearly stated that monitoring or support supervision visits were made to districts implementing projects. These are usually projects funded by development partners, who also fund the monitoring and support supervision visits. This fact was acknowledged by 79.4% of the respondents participating in the review workshops. This finding also suggests that districts without projects do not receive any support supervision, yet this activity forms part of the functional and technical reporting relationships. Obviously, this discrepancy in support supervision visits raises the fundamental issue of the extent to which the MGLSD fulfils this important role.

### 3.3.7 Communication and coordination

Due to the multisectoral nature of child protection, coordination becomes a very important aspect in making the system effective. A harmonised and coordinated response to the needs of children and other vulnerable groups is better achieved through effective stakeholder coordination at all levels. Coordination structures and mechanisms do exist at the national, local government, and community levels. In this discussion, the subject has been extended to include intraministerial coordination, i.e., between the Directorate of Social Protection and other directorates, as well as interministerial coordination, i.e., between the MGLSD and the MoLG's relevant directorates.

#### **a) Intraministerial communication and coordination**

In the MGLSD, the Directorate of Social Protection, through its Department of Children and Youth Affairs, is directly responsible for child protection in terms of policy and programming. In terms of service delivery, the three directorates work closely together to fulfil the mandate of the MGLSD. There is a strong coordination mechanism among the different units, structured at different levels of the ministry, and a regular schedule of meetings forms the major mode of coordination and communication. Weekly meetings (popularly known as 'Monday Meetings') bring together all directors and all department heads. They review plans, approve policies and guidelines, and receive and discuss reports from the respective directorates and departments. Their observations and recommendations are then taken up by top senior management, which comprises the Senior Minister, State Ministers, the Permanent Secretary, and Directors. In contrast, departments and directorates organise monthly meetings.

In view of the interrelatedness of the issues handled by the MGLSD, it is unrealistic to expect exclusivity in the roles, responsibilities, and key result areas of the directorates and departments. For example, because child protection is multisectoral and multidimensional, it cuts across social protection *per se* to gender and women affairs (since gender issues also apply to girls and boys), as well as to labour and employment due to child labour issues. Hence, while the Department of Children and Youth Affairs is the focal unit for coordinating child protection, it does coordinate with other departments on issues where they take the lead. There is also potential overlap between gender-based violence against adolescent girls and

boys and violence against children, and it remains unclear whether the Directorate of Social Protection or the Directorate of Gender and Women Affairs should take the lead and how they could work together on those issues. Similarly, the Department of Culture and Family Affairs has very strong overlap with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, specifically in relation to policies, plans, and guidelines that relate to the family. For example, the Department of Culture and Family Affairs has produced parenting guidelines for households and families. It is impossible to talk about family without talking about children and vice versa. The MGLSD might need to consider streamlining the functions of the two units as they relate to children.

#### ***b) Interministerial communication and coordination***

While the MGLSD has primary child protection policy responsibility, within the MoLG, the Directorate of Local Government Inspection is mandated with ensuring that services, including child care and protection, are being provided according to standards and regulations. Based on discussions, there is no special forum besides the national coordination mechanisms where the two ministries meet to deal with operational issues. This gap arises from the lack of a formalised counterpart arrangement between the two ministries. As this arrangement could serve as the first level of coordination and could provide organisational and technical leadership to the social service workforce in terms of addressing policy and strategic concerns, it is important to strengthen the collaborative linkages between the MGLSD's Directorate of Social Protection and the MoLG's Directorate of Local Government Inspection.

#### ***c) Multisectoral communication and coordination***

National-level coordination, according to the SDSP, is provided through thematic steering committee structures. The social protection for vulnerable and marginalised groups Committee is the thematic group that covers child protection issues. The National OVC Steering Committee, chaired by the MGLSD, brings together all government and development partner actors that have a stake in the provision of services to OVC. There is a loose structure, hosted within the MGLSD (though not part of the formal MGLSD structure), that provides coordination for child protection services, namely, the National Child Protection Working Group. This working group is open to institutions that operate nationally on child protection issues. Its purpose is to promote linkages, information-sharing, and mutual learning from research and best practices among the child protection actors.

However, as noted in the SDSP (2015/16–2019/20), the national-level thematic working groups are not functional due to irregular meetings and weak information flow among partners. There is also the challenge of project-based coordination mechanisms, which duplicate roles and resources, increase the work burden for participating stakeholders, and lack sustainability. For example, while the National OVC Steering Committee was set up in line with the OVC policy, the onset of the violence against children agenda established another outfit—the violence against children multisectoral team—that worked in parallel to the existing structure and enlisted the participation of similar stakeholders. This organisational system creates the appearance that violence against children is separate from child protection, which is not the case in practice.

According to the Director of Social Protection, MGLSD is moving towards the harmonisation of structures by creating a single coordination mechanism on children's issues at both the national and district levels. MGLSD has shown leadership by being decisive on the harmonised coordination structure, which will help to address the current challenges. In addition, a well-designed single registry will complement current efforts by bringing data/information together in one place, accessible to all stakeholders in the social development sector.

### **3.4 Conclusions**

Based on the information above, it would be realistic to conclude that the MGLSD, the MoLG, the MoPS, and justice, law and order sector institutions are aware of their central roles,



responsibilities, and functions and that they have made significant efforts to fulfil them. The evidence generated so far indicates a positive response towards strengthening the social service workforce in general, and child protection in particular. This response is evident in both the strategic development plans for the social development sector and the plans of justice, law and order sector institutions.

The legal and policy framework is basically adequate for strengthening social development sector institutions with reference to the social service workforce. The ministries demonstrated their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the social service workforce, the child protection needs, and the poor quality of services. However, effective leadership for child services must entail a persistent focus on improving the outcomes of children's services and on advocating for increased resources and prioritisation. For example, the MGLSD, the MoLG, and to an extent, the justice, law and order sector institutions have not projected the expected growth of the social service workforce. The responses to capacity-building for the social service workforce (especially with regard to human capital development and administrative and logistical support), to resource mobilisation, and to monitoring and support supervisions do not meet the development and support needs for the workforce's growth and functioning. Considerable improvement in this domain will require making bold decisions and strengthening the child protection environment by advocating and lobbying for increased resources, and above all, by moving away from rhetoric and towards transformational leadership.

With regard to financial resources, the SDSP projects that efforts will be made to increase the share of the social development sector in the national budget from a baseline of 0.44% in 2015 to 2.0% over the strategic period. However, three years into the implementation of the plan, not much has been realised, as the share of the budget devoted to the social development sector still lingers at 0.44%.

Through their sector development plans, both the MGLSD and justice, law and order sector institutions have analyzed social service workforce challenges, projected the growth of the sector, and detailed action plans to strengthen the social service workforce. The challenges lie in meeting set targets within the constraints of the resource envelope; developing a social service workforce cadre with relevant qualifications, skills, and attitudes; providing effective support for service delivery; and maximising available resources.

## 4. Situational Analysis of the Social Service Workforce

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This chapter provides an analysis of the functionality of the social service workforce in relation to child protection. The first section provides a synopsis of the landscape of child protection, including emergent issues and the changing legal and policy environments within which organized responses for child protection should be made. Subsequent sections illuminate the different aspects of the social service workforce, including its sociodemographic profile, the roles and responsibilities of the different cadres within the local government structure, and the visibility of child protection at different work levels and in programming and resource allocation. The organisational structure within the local government is discussed in relation to its impact on the functionality of the social service workforce. Other issues discussed include multisectoral coordination, capacity development, and the overall organisational culture and environment within the local government as part and parcel of public service.

### 4.1 The status of child protection

Despite efforts by government, development partners, and other stakeholders to promote the rights and welfare of children, child protection remains a daunting challenge for Uganda. Preventing and responding to violence, exploitation, and abuse against children constitute key elements of child protection<sup>9</sup>. Child protection issues can take the form of child rights violations, including the denial of a child's right to an identity, to proper health, to education, and to shelter, or they can take the form of outright abuse and exploitation. Research has shown that 51% of Uganda's children are either moderately (43%) or critically (8%) vulnerable, a situation that exposes children to constant risks of abuse and neglect (MGLSD 2011). Over 2.2 million children (8% of children under the age of 18) are orphans; ~2.5 million children live with some form of disability, representing 13% of all children in Uganda; ~31,000 children between the ages of 10 to 17 are heading households; ~40,000 children live in residential childcare institutions, and more than ~10,000 children live on the streets, with no adult care (Walakira et al. 2016). This situation is compounded by the fact that the majority of births are not registered, which complicates the planning and delivery of services.

A recent report on violence against children (MGLSD 2018) showed that one in four girls and one in ten boys aged 13–17 suffer from sexual violence, while four in ten girls and six in ten boys have suffered physical violence. Emotional and psychological violence are also common, with the MGLSD report (2018) showing that more than one in five 13- to 17-year-olds experience emotional abuse. The most disconcerting finding is that the perpetrators are persons who should ideally protect children, namely teachers, parents/relatives, and neighbours. Hence, children are unsafe at school, at home, and in their communities. At the same time, there are emerging risks and threats to children's well-being that complicate the child protection response. Examples include increasing cases of child sexual exploitation, including online child sexual exploitation and harassment; peer-to-peer bullying; child pornography; trafficking; and child labour, including involvement in the worst forms of labour, such as mining and plantation farming that adversely affect to the child wellbeing. Increasing numbers of children are trafficked to urban centres to provide domestic labour or to engage in street begging, while others, particularly teenagers, are trafficked across the country for other forms of labour and for sexual exploitation. More children are also engaging in sexual relations at an early age for different reasons, and these so-called consensual relationships, including those that are intergenerational, make controlling sexual abuse more challenging. Other

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<sup>9</sup> UNICEF, Child protection information sheet:  
[www.unicef.org/protection/files/What\\_is\\_Child\\_Protection.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/What_is_Child_Protection.pdf)

issues include child marriage and teenage pregnancy, which lead children to drop out of school and subsequently perpetuate the cycles of poverty, abuse, and violence against children.

With regard to child-related crime, police records show that 15,093 child-related cases in which children/juveniles were direct targets and victims of crime were reported in 2017, compared to 14,943 in 2016, reflecting a 1% increase (Table 3). The report further showed that between 2012 and 2017, a total of 128,000 girls were defiled, with 14,985 cases reported in 2017 alone (UPF 2018). Moreover, the cases reported to police represent just a small fraction of the total cases (MGLSD 2018).

**Table 3: Child-related crimes reported to police, 2016/2017**

Crime Cases	Juvenile victims		
	2016	2017	Difference
Child Neglect	11,949	12,152	+203
Child Desertion	3,287	3,280	-7
Child Abuse/Torture	1,408	1,391	-17
Child Kidnapping	997	751	-246
Child Abduction	670	329	-341
Child Stealing	239	423	+184
Child Trafficking	200	154	-46
Infanticide	58	78	+20

Source: Uganda Police Force, *Crime Report, 2017*, pg. 21, Table 15

Child neglect and child stealing saw the highest increase between 2016 and 2017, with child neglect having increased by 203 cases between the two periods. However, other crimes against children appear to have experienced some decline, though the numbers are still high, especially given the fact that crimes are underreported.

Besides cases of crimes against children, there is another category, that of children who are accused of perpetrating crimes, i.e., children in conflict with the law. These children also require specialised child protection services. Table 4 shows a summary of the cases recorded in 2017.

**Table 4: Children accused of crimes in 2017**

Crime	No. of juveniles accused, 2017
Defilement	181
Theft	967
Assault	144
Breaking	291
Robbery	68

Source: Uganda Police Force, *Crime Report, 2017*, pg. 21, Table 16

Children accused of crime represent those who are in conflict with the law and who, among others, require probation services. Critical issues brought to the fore during consultations include the increasing trend of using juveniles as accomplices in crimes such as burglary, theft, murder, and smuggling. This trend results in complicated situations in which children are accused along with adults and are sometimes committed to adult prisons despite the law forbidding this practice.

*Children are increasingly involved in crime as accomplices to adults or on their own, accessing information on the internet, on TV, radio. They are exposed to information that helps them try out things that amount to conflict with the law. We cannot ignore that trend where more juveniles commit high level offenses like possession of firearms, house breaking, robberies, aggravated defilement, theft and even terrorism. Like using a child to plant an explosive, carry arms from one location to another, break into houses, because they are the ones who can fit in ventilators and they are the least suspects and adults know children laws are more lenient even when intercepted. (national-level key informant)*

*Children are more than before committing capital offences especially aggravated defilement and these are mostly bordering the criminal responsibility age of 16-17 and in some cultures, they say these are young adults but it is different under our law unless there is an amendment like some circles were agitating recently about the age of consent. (magistrate)*

The increasing trends in juvenile offences and children getting into conflict with the law are attributed to household poverty, poor parenting practices, child neglect, and rural-urban migration, as well as the influx of refugee populations, where children living in very difficult circumstances become prey to illegal activities. It was also argued during consultations that exposure to uncensored information on the Internet and other social media is contributing to children's engagement in illegal activities, including drug and alcohol abuse. There is also the often completely overlooked category of children in contact with the law: children whose parents are in prison. These parents either have their babies and toddlers with them or have left their children unattended at home.

The above narrative reflects the magnitude of child protection issues and the urgency for effective social service systems and services.

## **4.2 The changing legal and policy landscape for child protection**

The legal and policy framework for designing and implementing child protection services is dynamic, with provisions constantly changing in response to new demands. These demands include changes in the local context, emergent child protection issues, and global trends and practices that offer lessons and best practices in child protection work.

### **4.2.1 Impacts on service delivery**

The legal and policy framework promotes informed decision-making and builds confidence among the social service workforce cadres in the execution of their duties. It also provides better clarity on child protection issues, the roles of duty bearers, and processes and procedures involved in the response. For example, the diversion of children from court, the strengthening of adoption processes, and directives on providing child-friendly environments have contributed to better services for children. The reduction in the remand period for children from six to three months for capital offences and from three months to two and a half months for noncapital offences is perceived as contributing to the reduced number of children on remand. Moreover, the current practice of allowing magistrates at different levels to handle child-related cases is helping to reduce the backlog of cases in courts. However, these changes also have direct implications for the nature and modes of delivery of child protection services, the competencies required by the social service workforce to effectively fulfil their mandates, and the new roles and responsibilities that should be taken up by the workforce. Social services workforce participants in consultative meetings noted that due to the perceived lenience in sentencing children in conflict with the law, there is an assumed increase in adults using children to commit capital offences. Participants also noted that children are openly exposed to undesirable elements, including online sexual abuse and pornography, under the guise of children enjoying their rights, including their right to access information.

The changes in laws, policies, and guidelines have redefined the roles and mandates of the social service workforce in relation to child care and have resulted in an increased volume of work. Some changes require new approaches to work and additional skills that social service

workforce may not necessarily have. The Children Act (as amended) 2016, provides a broader definition of the rights of children and of violence against children and places a stronger emphasis on community-based, family-oriented care, with institutional care seen as the last resort on a continuum of care for children. This emphasis is meant to reduce the unnecessary separation of children from families and requires intensified community engagement, increased advocacy, and more human and financial resources, as well as a set of competencies that are aligned to the new orientations in child care and protection. The Act also empowers families and community structures (i.e., local councils) to be involved in matters concerning child protection. However, communities and local grassroots structures in general lack adequate knowledge on the relevant laws and policies for child protection. The National Alternative Care Framework (2012) and the Children (Approved Homes) Rules (2013) set more stringent requirements for the admission, placement, and maintenance of children in residential care and prioritised de-institutionalisation. Thus, the PSWO must be continuously and actively involved in supervising, mentoring, and supporting the processes and procedures involved in caring for children in institutions.

*Child care institutions, the child care homes, are given certificates of approval to care for the children. So, they also do implement the continuum of care within the child protection framework and it requires us to move there and do a lot of mentoring and coaching for these child care institutions such that they can do each and everything within the confines of the law and also to understand and appreciate the fact the probation officer for example in a division and city level has the overall mandate for child care and protection not the child care institution because some of them thought they would undertake the roles of the probation officers, going to court, applying for care orders meant for probation officers. So, it is so demanding, it demands a lot from the probation and social welfare officers. (PSWO)*

Participants in the functional review's regional workshops argued that the closing of homes has resulted in complexities regarding where to place vulnerable children. This issue is exacerbated by the absence of government-run reception centres for children in most districts.

*It (Children Act) provides for de-institutionalisation of children. In the process of implementing the changes, the alternative care framework was developed, and a number of children homes were closed. Consequently, children who run away from home for one reason or the other and those who do not have permanent homes end living on the streets. You find them on streets, in hospitals. (PSWO)*

*It advocates for deinstitutionalisation and closure of child care institutions but doesn't take into account the problems we go through, first of all we don't have reception centres. They don't put into consideration other factors under which children get into children's homes. The way they call us and say "madam, come for your child" but where do I take him for example for children who have severe physical disability because some families are rigid and discriminate disabled children. Even the court can call you to take the child but where do I take them? (PSWO)*

Required facilities and services that are currently in short supply include reception centres, detention facilities, and remand homes. While the law requires that children be separated from adult offenders, in most cases, this is not possible due to a lack of facilities.

*We also do not have reception centres in most districts which are the first places of contact. The only known reception centre for children rehabilitation which is Kampiringisa is not playing the right role and children come out more hardened criminals instead of reforming. Another emerging issue is that the detention facilities are lacking in some places for example at police stations where children are kept together with adults where hard-core criminals are busy smoking substances as children are watching and learning new habits. Even at courts of laws, children are not supposed to be in the same cells with adults but that is the case due to scarcity of separate facilities. (national-level key informant)*

A majority of districts lack remand homes, with the only homes situated in Mbale, Kabale, Kabarole, Masindi, Arua, and Gulu. Yet, the law requires that children who are committed to remand be escorted by a probation officer, which, in most cases, is not practically possible due to long distances and lack of transportation, as well as heavy workloads. Thus, members of the social service workforce may be aware of what needs to be done in line with the law or policy, but they are unable to perform those duties due to organisational and logistical constraints, hence hindering their functionality with regard to child protection.

*For us in Yumbe district, we take them to Arua district which is about 96 kilometres. Sometimes we are forced to top up fuel for the person transferring the child, despite the meagre salary we get. The Probation Officers have no resources or budget to transport the children to remand or rehabilitation centres. Sometimes they try to liaise with the Community Development Officers to assist them with their motorcycles. (regional workshop participant)*

The area of foster care and adoption perhaps best represents the limited flow of policy guidelines and understanding of those policies down to the district and sub-county levels. Interviews with district social service workforce participants revealed an inadequate understanding of foster care, adoption, and child development. It was clear from discussions with the district and sub-county staff that misconceptions around the 'best environment for a child' remain. Within the global context, it is understood that the biological family is the best place for children. However, some participants commented that international adoption could be a better alternative, when in fact, the first effort should be to strengthen the family's capacity to care for the child, except when there is neglect and abuse warranting the statutory removal of the child from the family. There were additional comments that the reduction in foster care time was positive, in that it results in more applications for foster care. Absent from the increased benefits of foster care was an understanding of the child protection issues and the increased need to scrutinise applicants to ensure that children are placed in safe environments and are not being trafficked. Regardless of the misunderstandings and limited social service workforce staff knowledge, carrying out these responsibilities requires adequate manpower and skills.

#### 4.2.2 Execution of roles

The roles and responsibilities that come with ongoing changes in legal and policy instruments have unfortunately not been accompanied by changes in establishing, recruiting, and deploying staff, nor in building the capacity and competencies of existing social service workforce cadres. As a result, the social service workforce has become overstretched and inefficient in delivering child protection services. Issues of burnout and low staff morale caused by poor remuneration exacerbate the workforce challenges. During interactions with social service workforce staff, it became clear that individual cadres have become selective in which roles they perform and which they relegate to others or completely neglect, depending on which they anticipate will yield more financial benefit. Due to the relatively higher presence of different development actors, including civil society organisations, in the social welfare sector, most social service workforce staff tend to be drawn to roles within that sector, compared to, for example, probation services roles. At the community level, CDOs were reported to pay more attention to economic strengthening intervention projects, such as the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE), the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP), and the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund, than to child protection work.

While many actors are mandated to fulfil specific roles with regard to child protection, there appears to be a lack of clarity regarding the boundaries of the different actors' roles and responsibilities, which leads to overlap and ambiguities. According to participants, the roles implied in the legal and policy instruments are crosscutting and have not been clearly delineated in practice. For example, the police (and in particular, the CFPU) quite often perform PSWO roles, including the attempted conducting of social inquiries, resettlement, and



rehabilitation, to the extent that they have earned the informal label of ‘Assistant Probation Officers.’

*The changes in the Children Act [and Probation Act?] have caused a lot of cross-cutting roles among the different social service workforce or Officers. You find the Probation Officer doing the same work with the CFPU and Community Development Officer. Therefore, there is need to streamline these roles and enhance coordination. (workshop participant)*

*We as Police Officers (CFPU) are now almost doing Probation work and people sometimes call us Probation Officers. So, there is a lot of overlapping roles that need to be harmonised by the line ministries. (workshop participant)*

Recent developments in child care reform have also brought to the fore the need for a workforce that does not just have random higher education qualifications, but rather can demonstrate competence in specific areas, particularly social work, child protection, family law, and juvenile justice. These competencies require effective arrangements for continuous professional development, mentorship, coaching, and supervision at different work levels.

*The Amendments suggest a lot of work in regard to child welfare and protection, which requires a social worker or a person with knowledge in social work but some of the Senior Officers implementing the activities at the District level don't have any social work background. (workshop participant)*

*We as the implementing Officers lack ethical and professional skills in service delivery on issues to do with children Welfare and Protection yet some of the issues in the Amended Laws require specific skills. We therefore require specific skills in areas of: Child Protection, Counselling, justice (Law) and investigations among others. Some of the people working with children have no passion for children. (workshop participant)*

There was a general acknowledgement among different participants that professional social work provides a strong foundation for social service workforce staff, especially those working in probation and social welfare. However, this acknowledgement does not negate the need for competency-based, capacity-building programmes for the workforce to function more effectively.

In general, the changes in the legal and policy landscape have not been accompanied by necessary adjustments to the organisational infrastructure nor to workforce requirements, in terms of both numbers and competencies.

#### 4.2.3 Dissemination, accessibility, and interpretation of legal and policy framework

A key issue that cut across discussions with members of the local government social service workforce relates to gaps in the dissemination and appropriate communication of laws and policies, including their ongoing changes. For example, only 21% of the 56 social service workforce participants from the community-based services departments reported having been oriented in the Children Act (2016, as amended), and interactions with the majority of police, i.e., with CFPU staff, revealed serious gaps in knowledge of any child-related laws and policies, including not being aware of the amendments to the Children Act.

*We have never been oriented on the work that we are supposed to do as amended in the new Acts or policies, yet there is a lot of activities/work that we are supposed to implement as regards to issues of child welfare and protection. We therefore propose for refresher courses every after like three years to keep updated on the new changes. (workshop participant)*

*The social service workforce at community level don't know about the current changes in the legal and policy framework. Apart from PSWOs and DCDOs who attend these meetings (such as this one today), other cadres at lower levels are not well informed about laws and policies related to child care and protection. If you asked a CDO at sub-county level about the changes*

*in the legal and policy framework, they will actually ask you: Is there any change? Many of us are here but we know nothing about those changes. (workshop participant)*

Most participants also argued that the laws are not easy to comprehend or interpret due to difficulties with language and the legal jargon that is sometimes used.

### 4.3 Social service workforce structure and functions

The structure of the social service workforce, similar to the structure of services, is multilayered, ranging from the national to the district and lower local government levels. At the national level, the MoPS is constitutionally responsible for:

- Apointing, promoting, and exercising disciplinary control over persons holding office in the public service of Uganda, as provided in article 172 of the Constitution
- Reviewing the terms and conditions of service, standing orders, trainings, and qualifications of public officers; reviewing matters connected with personnel management and development of the public service; and making recommendations on those matters to the Government
- Guiding and coordinating district service commissions.

The MGLSD is responsible for protecting and promoting the welfare of all children in terms of policy and strategic roles. Within the MGLSD, the Directorate of Social Protection, and specifically, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs is responsible for children and youth affairs policy and strategic outcomes.

#### 4.3.1 Community-based services department organisational structure

The local government functional structure is elaborated in legal instruments, with well-established accountability centres and job establishments at different levels, including at the district local government, urban authority, and sub-county levels. The roles, responsibilities, and relationships between the political and technical wings of the local governments are also clearly defined. In this structure, the CAO is the accounting officer for the district, implying that managers such as the DCDO ultimately report to the CAO. The DCDO oversees and is responsible for:

- Gender issues, family affairs, and culture and community development
- Probation, and children and youth affairs
- Disability and the elderly
- Labour, employment, and industrial relations.

The full structure is depicted in Figure 4 below. It is within this structure that the social service workforce operates and is expected to fulfil its mandates.

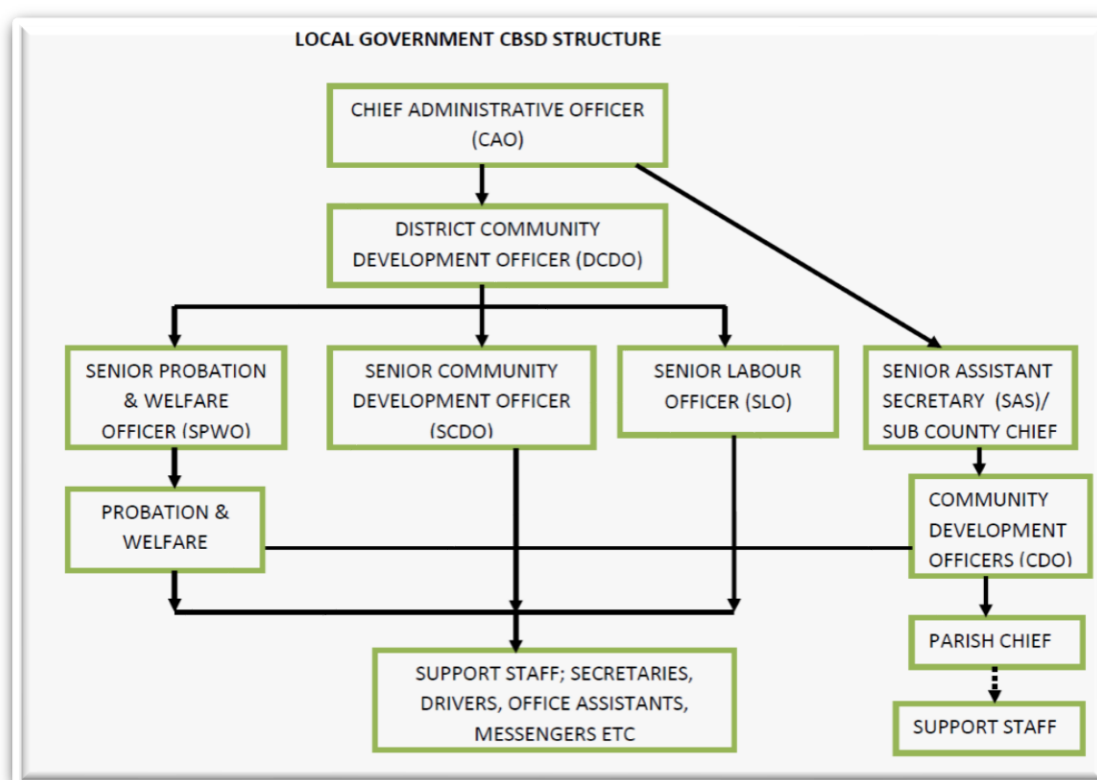
In creating this structure for community-based services departments, organisational design principles, such as the separation of functions, reporting relationships, the grouping of similar functions together, the principle of 'structure follows strategy', and cost implications appear to have been observed. However, challenges arise from misinterpretations of the structure in terms of *line* and *technical* responsibilities (which is a leadership issue), from inadequate staffing, from the lack of comprehensive job descriptions, and from the lack of adequate competencies required to effectively deliver services. More importantly, there are gaps in knowledge of how to use performance management approaches to maximise the available resources within local governments.

At the district level, the social service workforce is hosted within the community-based services department headed by the DCDO, who in turn reports to the CAO, the overall accounting officer in the district. At this level, the community-based services department is mandated to



deliver child protection services (and promote the welfare of the children) within its geographic areas of jurisdiction. In terms of line reporting relationships, the structure is complete.

**Figure 4: Community-based services organogram**



#### 4.3.2 Major concerns regarding operationalisation of the structure

Besides the different roles that the community-based services department plays in relation to child protection, the following concerns were noted in the functional review:

1. The technical reporting and supervisory relationship with regard to the social welfare and probation function at the centre (i.e., the MGLSD) is not explained. In short, the structure does not show functional reporting responsibility. In practice, district-based probation and social welfare services are expected to have a functional, advisory reporting relationship with the technical ministry, as their direct accountability centre lies within the respective local governments. Such a practice might appear to translate into different accountability centres for the social service workforce. However, in practice, this issue should not arise and if it did, it would in essence strengthen the technical ministry's technical support to the social service workforce. Otherwise, there is limited guarantee within the current community-based services department structure that probation services are receiving adequate technical support supervision from the leadership at the local government level.
2. Another major observation of the structure is the convergence of the functions of community development, labour, and probation and social welfare into one function at the sub-county level, i.e., to the CDO. According to job descriptions of the CDO, the person in this position is only expected to perform community development tasks, which simply means that probation and social welfare services are not addressed at the sub-county level. The review, however, established the fact that CDOs are performing probation and social welfare roles to a limited extent and without technical guidance from the respective officers at the district level, as the technical relationship between the district and sub-county levels is not clearly articulated.

3. It was noted that the relationship between the district and sub-county levels in terms of probation and social welfare services is weak, implying the limited extent to which social service functions cascade from the district to the community levels. With the current reforms in case management at the community level and the strengthened role of parasocial workers and parish chiefs in child protection and OVC programming in general, it is clear that the current structure does not provide for a functioning system of child protection. This structure is likely to create poor coordination and a breakdown in reporting and supervision.
4. The local governments are, by law, entrusted with the responsibility of recruiting and overseeing the performance of persons employed by the Government who provide services in their areas and to monitor the provision of those services. According to section 95A of the Children (Amendment) Act (2016), the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development has the mandate to appoint and supervise PSWOs in consultation with the district service commissions. However, this provision is redundant, as it contravenes the provisions of the Local Governments Act (as amended) 2015 and the decentralisation policy, which vests the mandate to recruit and appoint local government workers with the district local governments.
5. An important structure within which the social service workforce functions is the child justice system, coordinated within the justice, law and order sector. The child justice system encompasses multiple institutions and structures, including the local councils and local council courts, the CFPU within the UPF, the Directorate of Public Prosecution (DPP), the Criminal Investigations Department, the Courts of Judicature (the Family and Children Court and the High Court), and the MGLSD (Department of Probation and Social Welfare and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs). Under decentralisation, the MGLSD is expected to provide technical support supervision and capacity-building to PSWOs within local governments. At the same time, since a significant part of the functions of the PSWO position lie within the justice, law, and order sector, i.e., probation services, the PSWO has a direct (functional) and technical reporting relationship with the judicial services. This relationship has, however, been misunderstood in practice, resulting in little support from the justice, law and order sector and a lack of adequate attention paid to the probation function within the local governments. This issue suggests that the probation function is now at a crossroads, rooted firmly in neither the local governments nor in the justice system, thus negatively impacting effective protection services for children in conflict and in contact with the law.
6. Regarding reporting, the structure is clear as to who reports to whom. However, challenges arise from the sharing of reports and technical reporting arrangements. There have been complaints that the technical reports submitted through the CAO do not reach the technical wing of the MGLSD. This problem has arisen because the line and technical lines of reporting within the decentralised system have not been clarified, because technical reporting is not indicated in job descriptions, and because district leadership (i.e., the CAO) does not appreciate the information-sharing relationship with the MGLSD. It is a normal expectation that the technical aspects of reports are shared with the functional ministry for evaluation and to respond to the challenges faced by implementing departments. As noted earlier, leadership is expected to act upon these issues as they emerge, preventing them from escalating into destructive issues. If such issues are discussed during coordination meetings, it is incumbent upon strategic level leadership to address any identified gaps.

#### 4.3.3 Implications of the local government structure on the functionality of the social service workforce

Child protection services are provided within the decentralised structure, with local governments taking on the primary responsibility for children's welfare and protection. The decentralised system offers many potential benefits for service delivery, including flexibility in priority-setting, participatory planning, resource mobilisation and allocation, and recruitment and deployment of the workforce, in addition to opportunities that tap into local solutions to local problems, including the use of community structures and resources to support child care and protection. Community participation and empowerment are critical in strengthening child protection systems and responses.

*There is participatory planning and decision-making. The communities are involved in planning and decision-making about their problems and needs. Even children's views are sometimes captured during the planning period. This involvement of children is right from the village, to sub-county and District levels. (workshop participant)*

*Community empowerment—the communities have been empowered and they can now resolve minor child-related cases without involving CDOs. Similarly, as a result of empowerment the communities and families can now report cases related to child abuse, neglect to police and community development department. (workshop participant)*

Despite their undeniable benefits, the functional structure and organisations of the community-based services department pose some constraints to the effective functioning of the workforce, particularly with regard to reporting relationships and job establishments at the different levels. This complexity is elaborated in the following examples.

1. **Coaching and mentorship:** The community-based services department coordinates several sub-sectors, including gender, disability and elderly, labour, community development, and child protection, with the district head biased towards the community development function. Previously, the community-based services department was a directorate comprising different departments, including that of probation and social welfare. Although strongly linked to community development, the probation function is more specialised and technical, and it requires support supervision from leadership and management that is well grounded in child protection, which is currently not the case in many local governments. In practice, those responsible for the social welfare and probation function in many districts are not adequately mentored or supervised within the organisational set-up, which compromises performance. The MGLSD provides support supervision, but as mentioned earlier, this supervision is often linked to development partner-funded projects within specified districts.
2. **Visibility of child protection:** While restructuring community-based services into a departmental model has the benefit of cutting costs, its operationalisation appears to have minimised the visibility of child protection within the existing set-up, resulting in low resource allocation, inadequate staffing, and inadequate support supervision and technical backstopping. The current job description for the DCDO diminishes child protection services, including probation services.
3. **Career progression:** According to the design of the community-based services department structure, career progression is most open to the PSWO, the Labour Officer, and the CDO, all of whom have a senior-level position to aspire to. While the structure depicts the career progression for a senior officer to become a DCDO, the practice being promoted is that a senior officer must first work at the principal officer level, for districts without a PCDO, as a prequalification for appointment to the DCDO position. Senior officers at this level can only aspire to move to municipal- or central-level positions through a competitive process of interview or consideration, rather than promotions being based on good or exceptional performance within a specific cadre.

By implication, the district Senior PSWO and the Senior CDO have little room for career progression within the system, since municipal positions that offer principal officer-level opportunities are relatively few. This issue is compounded by the fact that districts in general tend to recruit people from their own districts. The limited opportunities for career progression within the community-based services department structure can potentially demoralise the workforce, affect performance, and lead to high attrition levels. A similar situation exists at the sub-county level, where CDOs are not permitted to progress to an administrative position within that level. However, they can apply for senior positions at the district level when a vacancy is created.

*The structure is very rigid, for example the CDO cannot be promoted unless she/he crosses to another area say as sub county chief and she has to apply again which means going for further studies in specific areas. This has demotivated some of these Community Development Officers. (regional workshop participant)*

4. **Responsibility of the PSWO to the CDO:** Although the local government organisational structure suggests a vertical relationship between the CDO at the sub-county level and a PSWO at the district level, this has not been fully operationalised or routinely reflected in practice and is not even reflected in the formal job descriptions of either party. The current MoPS job descriptions do not specify any technical supervisory roles of the PSWO towards the CDO, nor is this relationship reflected in the CDO job description. By default, the CDO submits reports to the PSWO in the district. Evidence from functional review consultations confirmed this lack of a technical supervisory and mentorship relationship between the district and sub-county social service workforce, particularly in regard to the child protection function, and yet the CDO serves as a child protection officer at the sub-county level.
5. **Roles of child protection and community development at the sub-county level:** The CDO delivers community development and probation and social welfare services and is in charge of both juvenile justice and community service for other offenders. Despite the difficulties this structure creates in identifying specific sets of competencies to effectively fulfil these roles, the current structure provides for one CDO position at that level, which is evidently not enough for effective service delivery.

*At least if the structure is divided for the Community Development Office at the Sub County to have an Assistant Community Development Officer to handle issues of child protection. The current structure is worse and cannot favour performance of the CDOs. At the Ministry of Public Service level, you find a person is concerned with only one thing say filing, receiving files, entering data etc. yet at the District we have a lot of work but with minimum pay. (workshop participant)*

In general, although the local government structure is well streamlined, the systems and operational practices that are embedded within it constrain the functionality of the social service workforce to some degree. This trend is exacerbated by inadequate resources at all levels, which affects not only the salaries and emoluments of the social service workforce but more importantly, the tools, facilities, and equipment to facilitate effective work.

#### 4.3.4 Nomenclature

It is usually a standard practice in public service to adopt standardised job titles for ease of reference, coding, or classification. In the case of the DCDO, normal interpretation points to community development as the major focus of the job, rather than the management and coordination roles and functions within community-based services. A more generic title that reflects the managerial role of the positions, such as District Community Services Manager/Coordinator would be more appealing and encompassing than the current title. Use

of the current title for a managerial position may send wrong signals to the rest of the organisation. The nomenclature might be inadvertently contributing to the low emphasis on child-related services in favour of community development within the community-based services department and the local government in general.

#### 4.4 Roles and responsibilities of social service workforce cadres

The roles and responsibilities of the different cadres within the community-based services department are elaborated in the job descriptions prepared by the MoPS for the local governments. The current job descriptions were updated in 2016, although the document is dated 2017. The job descriptions broadly provide the job's purpose, duties, and responsibilities. Close scrutiny of the roles and responsibilities outlined in the job descriptions reveals some strengths as well as some gaps. There are fairly clear reporting relationships, with the responsibility for the overall coordination of community-based services lying with the DCDO. According to the official job descriptions, the DCDO assumes leadership and management roles, overseeing the different sectors within the community-based services department, including gender, disability and the elderly, community development, labour, and probation and social welfare. Essentially, this position requires pragmatic knowledge of the different sectors to be able to provide meaningful support and mentorship to the different supervisees. The DCDO is also responsible for coordinating and liaising with nongovernmental actors that provide services within the district.

The Senior PSWO and PWSO play central roles in social welfare and child protection. In fact, the two positions reflect the probation, youth, and children functions of the MGLSD at the district level, especially as presented in the community-based services department structure. The rest of the cadre positions mostly facilitate community development through mobilisation, sensitisation, the initiation of development projects through groups, and the monitoring of community-based projects, among others. At the sub-county level, the CDO plays triple roles in community development, probation, and social welfare, although only the community development function is captured in the formal job description.

##### 4.4.1 Gaps in job descriptions in relation to child protection

In addition to other management uses, e.g., recruitment, job descriptions are also prepared to aid with the implementation of a structure by specifying what each position in the structure should be doing. As noted earlier, it was further observed that issues of child protection are not adequately acknowledged in the job descriptions of the social service workforce cadres, including that of the DCDO. This lack of adequate attention to child protection, as well as other discrepancies in the roles and responsibilities, are illustrated in the following observations.

##### ***a) Low emphasis on child care and protection services in the community-based services department leadership***

The job purpose, roles, and key result areas of the DCDO are skewed towards community development in general rather than towards child protection. While one would argue that it is impossible to highlight all areas of focus in a summary job description, in reality, the DCDO job description does specify several areas of focus, and child care and protection are noticeably absent. Within the specific roles of the DCDO, community development, community participation in development projects, gender, disability, and labour issues are mentioned specifically, while child care and protection are not mentioned at all. The closest child protection issue described within the role of the DCDO is the monitoring of remand homes, which falls directly within the ambit of the PSWO. As much as the DCDO is a management position, it might be important to strengthen the visibility of child care and protection by stating those key responsibilities in the job description, as children represent one of the most vulnerable categories of the population. One way of increasing visibility is by declaring child protection an area of assessment for local governments.



**b) Lack of adequate attention to the probation function within the Senior PSWO job description**

The probation function within the Senior PSWO position includes this language: “*Attending court sessions to present investigation reports on matters regarding family social welfare, juvenile crime and child abuse.*” This description ignores all the other roles and responsibilities associated with providing probation services to children in contact with the law and to their families and communities. This job description is also biased towards other functions. In short, the job description is not comprehensive enough for a senior position with supervisory responsibility over a PSWO.

**c) Total absence of a job description for the PSWO position**

The total absence of a job description for PSWOs means that they have been operating without formal guidance. The lack of a job description for this cadre may have also contributed to the over 50% of PSWOs who admitted to not performing their court-related duties, as well as an estimated 40% of Senior PSWOs not complying with statutory roles.

**d) Potential overlaps between the Senior PSWO and Senior CDO roles**

Without clear operationalisation in practice, the formal job descriptions of the Senior PSWO and Senior CDO have significant overlaps. The purpose of the Senior PSWO position is to: “*Ensure protection of children, mobilise, and facilitate the participation of youth in social development*”. This purpose is well-reflected in the specific duties and responsibilities. Conversely, the job purpose of the Senior CDO is: “*To coordinate all gender, culture and community-based services, programmes and projects in the district/urban council and facilitate their development.*” Both positions have a strong job function component of community mobilisation for participation in development projects. The Senior PSWO is responsible for youth mobilisation for development, while the Senior CDO is responsible for all manner of community mobilisation and development. This difference would indicate that the Senior CDO leaves youth mobilisation and the monitoring of youth development projects to the Senior PSWO, but this is not the case in practice. There is no clearly defined boundary regarding the Senior PSWO’s role in community development.

The functional review also found inconsistencies in responsibilities regarding statutory and non-statutory roles, with all cadres in the community-based services department taking on additional roles that go far beyond those provided for in the statutory instruments. In such cases, sometimes less attention is given to statutory roles.

*Our roles are not properly defined in the job descriptions... should be standardised by differentiating between statutory and non-statutory in the appointment letters. (CDO)*

Ideally, the MoPS should conduct elaborate job analyses to determine the roles, responsibilities, required competencies, and specifications of the job holder, as well as requisite qualifications and experience. However, these analyses have not been consistently done, hence the job descriptions have not been well grounded in what the practice and other realities demand.

In general, as has been indicated in previous studies on Uganda’s social service workforce (see for example, 4Children 2018 and SOCY 2018), the current job descriptions are inadequate in specifying the roles, functions, duties, qualifications, and required core competencies of the social service workforce in relation to child protection.

#### 4.4.2 Operationalisation of the probation and social welfare function

The probation and social welfare functions are at the centre of child protection services within the local government set-up. The probation and social welfare office directly represents the MGLSD’s mandate on child care and protection at the local government level. The probation

and social welfare mandate comprises two distinct functions in child protection, namely, the provision of probation services and of social welfare services. Historically, the probation function formed a core role in professional social work, where casework was used to support and facilitate the rehabilitation of the offender as well as to supervise and continuously report on the probationer's progress. This noncustodial approach to treating offenders emphasised rehabilitation, resettlement, individualised social casework, and reintegration—a social welfare approach to social problems (Klaus 1998). In Uganda, while the Probation Act (as amended), 2015 was developed in the spirit of the broad understanding of the probation function, over the years, it has been narrowed to juvenile justice and the support of children in conflict and in contact with the law. With the enactment of the Children Act, the probation function was merged with social welfare services within the social development sector. The PSWO thus performs probation functions mostly within the justice, law and order sector, as well as additional, much broader social welfare functions within the local government involving families and children facing a wide array of difficult circumstances.

The two functions are both well reflected in the current job descriptions of the Senior PSWO, albeit with a distorted representation of the probation function, which has narrowed to attendance at court to present social inquiries. This description is not broad enough to capture all other responsibilities associated with providing support to children in conflict and in contact with the law, including counselling, rehabilitation, resettlement, mediation, and follow-up supervision, that Senior/PSWOs are expected to perform.

In practice, the probation roles are not being fulfilled as required due, in part, to the amalgamation of these roles into one job position, which increases the workload considerably.

*One 'Probation Officer' (sic) is supposed to go to courts and attend court sessions, they must be in office because they handle cases of welfare, and they receive children, process care orders. When we have juveniles, they are supposed to come to Police and interview at the same time attend court sessions. When we get abandoned children, the POs [Probation Officers] are supposed to receive and process care orders. The performance of probation officers (sic) will affect our performance as well. (national-level key informant)*

Furthermore, there appears to be a lack of clarity in the centres of accountability between the two mandates of probation and social welfare, with one argument in favour of probation operating within the justice system (court) and another favouring the status quo, where it operates within the local government. In either case, there has been limited attention to the probation function in general. This fact was reflected in discussions with different stakeholders.

*There is clear coordination between our court and the family and child protection unit but not with the probation officer at the district. We have always raised this why the probation officer is not part of us. A case has been raised that the office is poorly facilitated. We hear this on a daily basis which means that their office should be part of the judicial system. That office should be run by three or four people because our courts are full time and that means that they should be engaged with us full time when we are handling those issues. In addition, they have always raised issues of facilitation. You find they don't have transport, the court may be a distance away, we need to visit some homes that are like miles from here and who is going to facilitate? Sometimes we give orders that the probation officer should visit some homes but the officer is not facilitated. So those are the gaps. (local government key informant)*

The conceptualisation of the probation function as being much broader than juvenile justice was also reflected in participants' views, as well as the conflict created by the current arrangement, where probation is appended to the social welfare function and expected to be fulfilled within a single job position.

*Probation is a court-based service aimed ensuring that offenders are given alternative sentences other than jail and hence the probation services aim at ensuring that whatever sentence is given is served accordingly and the offenders reintegrated within the community.*



*Probation is about offenders including child offenders. As you can see this is more than just children and it is mixed up under the same function at the district level. Then we have probation orders which are not being used in Uganda. So, now the mix up comes up when we have children and the probation orders that are not active, and you add the social welfare bit. So, you find the emphasis is more on welfare other than the probation services. At the moment they only look at the juvenile offenders. The challenge, however, is that the probation officers are not court based. So, many times you find that they are not available for the child offenders. You find police stuck with the children who conflict with the law and in many the probation officers are not available and I don't blame them for not being available. (national-level key informant)*

Having recognised the heavy load put on staff in this position, a PSWO position was recently created to supplement the already existing Senior PSWO position. However, the MoPS has yet to commission and develop a job description for the PSWO position. In practice, the two positions currently share the same job description.

#### 4.4.3 Roles and responsibilities of PSWOs defined in the PSWO Handbook

The PSWO Handbook (2018) elaborates the key areas of focus for the PSWO, which reflect the dynamic roles and functions beyond those listed in statutory instruments. The functions reflect a stronger focus on child protection compared to the traditional roles and functions contained in the MoPS job descriptions. The PSWO Handbook distinguishes between the statutory and non-statutory roles of the PSWO; it does not list the roles, but rather the statutory instruments in which these roles are reflected. These instruments include:

- The Children Act (Cap. 59) (as amended), 2016,
- The Community Service Act, 2001
- The Probation Act, Cap. 122, 1963
- The Children (Approved Homes) Rules, Statutory Instruments Supplement No. 30, S.I. No. 52, 2013
- The Adoption of Children Rules, 1997
- The Local Governments Amendment Act, 2015
- The Domestic Violence Act, 2010
- The Family & Children Court Rules, 1996

The non-statutory roles include:

- Awareness creation and sensitisation of stakeholders on the rights and responsibilities of children
- Proposal writing and resource mobilisation
- Training, mentoring, coaching, support supervision, and monitoring of other actors (i.e., state and nonstate actors; formal and informal structures)
- Coordination, collaboration, communication, and networking with other stakeholders in the district (state and nonstate actors)
- Advocacy for child rights and the observance of national and international days
- Planning and budgeting for child welfare
- Data management for planning and decision-making purposes
- Case management: identification; enrolment; assessment; case plan development and updating; direct service provision; monitoring case plan implementation; and case closure, transition, or attrition.

The roles can also be translated from the core areas, values, and principles with regard to probation and social welfare services, as outlined in the Handbook. These areas include: children in conflict and in contact with the law, family-based care, children and HIV/AIDS, the promotion of child rights (and responsibilities), advocacy for children as a future resource, and the role of the community in child protection. Each of these core areas, values, and principles is accompanied by a set of responsibilities and duties for the PSWO. For example, children affected and infected by HIV require a range of services, including care, respect, and support; community awareness raising; advocacy for equal opportunities; training of child protection workers on HIV among children; and providing sexual and reproductive health rights information. To promote child rights, the Handbook lists a range of job functions for the PSWO, including working with communities to raise awareness, promoting child participation, empowering communities, spearheading campaigns against harmful cultural practices, managing cases, implementing policy, and monitoring.

In 2018, 4Children conducted an assessment of the current job descriptions and qualifications, performance standards, and supervisory responsibilities of the different cadres of the social service workforce, which revealed similar findings, namely:

- Only an estimated 40% of Senior PSWOs comply with the statutory roles of the job (i.e., jobs that are clearly regulated by current laws)
- Over 50% of the PSWOs admitted to not performing their court-related duties due to factors including a lack of cordial working relationships with other justice, law and order sector officers; limited awareness of the PSWO court functions; and logistical gaps, among others
- The job purpose and roles prescribed by the MoPS job descriptions and the specifications for jobs in local governments do not align with those outlined in the MGLSD's *Operational Manual for Probation and Social Welfare Officers*.

#### 4.4.4 PSWO functions within the justice, law and order sector

The PSWO performs functions related to juvenile justice, with children in contact with the law and with offenders committed to community service. Conversely, the social welfare function is primarily coordinated within the MGLSD. From the justice, law and order sector perspective, the PSWO should be a full-time staff person within that sector rather someone divided between different job centres, as is currently the case. The DPP's *Prosecuting child-related cases in Uganda: A Handbook for Directorate of Public Prosecutions* provides an elaborate set of job functions for PSWOs, as indicated in the text box.

##### Duties of a PSWO in the justice, law and order sector

- Attending courts in cases involving children
- Carrying out social and background inquiries about children, as required by the courts
- Submitting social inquiry reports for the courts, especially about child offenders and child protection cases
- Supervising probationers and children placed on supervision orders
- Supervising young people after release from the National Detention Centre (formally referred to as Approved Schools)
- Supervising approved children and babies Homes
- Tracing, resettlement, and follow-up of children from Children and Babies Homes
- Investigating reports about the abuse of children and taking steps to protect them
- Supporting families or children in difficult circumstances
- Sensitising the community on matters concerning child care and protection
- Creating systems or mechanisms for the care and protection of vulnerable children
- Providing a link between nongovernmental organisations engaged in child welfare programmes
- Providing professional information about child care and protection

The assumption here is that there is indeed such a designation as 'Probation Officer,' when in practice, this role does not exist and has been subsumed into social welfare in general. With the enactment of the Community Service Act 2001, the probation function was expanded to nonjuveniles and appears in the workplans of PSWOs in some districts, although it is currently not reflected in their formal job descriptions.

In 2013, the MGLSD commissioned a review of the probation function in conjunction with the justice, law and order sector Secretariat. The purpose of the review was to assess the propriety, adequacy, and relevance of the legal and policy framework, as set out in the Probation Act 1963; its structural set-up under the Local Governments Act Amendment 2015; and its current relevance to the service of children in the justice system. It was noted that national-level officials were not adequately supervising the probation function. Furthermore, it was being negatively affected by multiple laws, regulations, and guidelines accruing from different sectors that converge on this function, including, for example, the agriculture, health, education, and more broadly, the OVC/child protection sectors. All of these sectors and emerging reforms have continuously added tasks and responsibilities to the portfolio of probation. The justice, law and order sector recognises that the probation function is not being carried out as it should, with serious consequences for justice for children, as well as for their protection and welfare.

*One of the biggest challenges for child-friendly justice in Uganda at present is the acute lack of Probation Officers. This shortage may explain many of the ills in the child justice system such as detention of children with adults, children being remanded for long periods instead of being diverted and so on. There is an urgent need for the central and local governments to employ more Probation Officers to enable the child justice system to function in a manner that promotes the best interests of children. (DPP, Prosecuting Child-Related Cases in Uganda: A Handbook for Directorate of Public Prosecutions, undated, pg. 19)*

Through interviews, it was established that several juveniles had missed court sessions due to lack of a Probation Officer to represent them in court. In other cases, the CFPU (who are evidently not adequately trained in probation services) assumed the responsibility of taking children to court and representing them.

According to the justice, law and order sector's Annual Performance Report 2017/18, out of the 5,040 children cases handled, 3,843 were diverted through efforts of police, i.e., through efforts made by CFPU, the Criminal Investigation Department, and Probation, Prosecution, and Courts in justice, law and order sector sites. The report also revealed that out of a total of 17,428 child-related cases, 10,360 were criminal, and 7,068 were civil. These numbers reflect the growing need for an adequate social service workforce, and particularly PSWOs to support the juvenile justice system.

In general, the mandates for probation and social welfare functions, which lie at the heart of child protection services within the social service workforce in the local government context, are not being effectively fulfilled. Constraints vary and are associated with inadequate staff establishment and the limited number of job positions filled in the local governments; role overload at all levels, including at the district and sub-county levels; and inadequate competencies with regard to the probation function, juvenile justice, and the general legal and justice system and culture. Another challenge is the valid expectation that a full-time PSWO is required in the judicial/court system, given the fact that children and family cases are ongoing. Hence, for the PSWO, being present in one setting, such as, in the community, for community-oriented child protection responses, implies being absent from other settings, such as those related to court-related probation and social welfare functions, thus resulting in ineffectiveness

#### 4.4.5 Lack of formal recognition of the child protection function at the sub-county level

The CDO role is broader than child protection since CDOs are responsible for issues of community mobilisation; for gender, disability, and elderly issues; and in general, for social protection at the community level. Despite the central role of the CDO in child protection, the formal job descriptions for this position focus squarely on community development rather than child protection. The only mention made in relation to children is: “*sensitise communities to adhere to existing legislation on gender and child rights.*” In practice, CDOs play the role of PSWOs, as they must support children in conflict with the law. CDOs also perform many other child protection-related duties, including case management, the promotion of child rights, labour inspections, gender-based violence responses, counselling and psychosocial support, and other forms of responses to diverse child protection issues at the sub-county level. CDOs also offer support supervision for community-based volunteers, such as parasocial workers, who work directly with children at the community level. Discussions with CDOs who participated in the regional consultative workshops confirmed that they are aware of these gaps in their job descriptions but continue to perform the duties as they are assigned to them.

*There is no specific role for child care and protection in CDOs job description. We do not have the mandate to handle such cases. So, we’ve been handling child cases illegally. (regional workshop participant)*

*At the Sub county level, the Community Development Officers are doing a lot of work in the area of development and child-related issues. They have ended up concentrating on development issues because that is where they get some money. I am proposing that we review the structure to create a position of Assistant Community Development Officer to handle issues of children specifically. (key informant, human resource manager)*

*Considering the workload, it would not be proper to remove the ACDO [Assistant Community Development Officer] positions. There are OVC activities to carry out, there are VACs [violence against children], registrations, functional adult literacy. The work is overwhelming. (CDO)*

*Staffing gaps is the other challenge we are facing. At the sub county level there is need to recruitment an Assistant Probation Officer to help coordinate issues of children and the Community Development Officer concentrates on the development issues. (regional workshop participant)*

Recent related research has shown that although the CDO roles are well aligned with the SDSP, their role or assumed roles in child protection are not entrenched in the current job descriptions by the public service (4Children 2018). The situation presents a glaring gap in child protection at the community level and a disconnect between the district probation and social welfare office and the lower local governments. If CDOs were to fulfil all of their roles and responsibilities relating to child protection, they would never have any remaining time or energy for their community development roles, which in fact constitute their statutory obligations. Hence, routinely, CDOs have to choose between competing roles and responsibilities and are not positioned to adequately fulfil either set.

#### 4.5 Qualifications and competencies

The determination of qualifications and competencies is part of the job analysis process. This part of the resulting job description guides recruitment as well as on-the-job development needs. The MoPS has determined person specifications for all prepared job descriptions, except for that of the PSWO position. The following sections outline the findings from the functional review related to qualifications and competencies.

#### 4.5.1 District Community Development Officer

The qualifications in the job description for the DCDO position include an Honours bachelor's degree in the social sciences, development studies, rural development studies, or in social work and social administration from a recognised higher education institution. These qualifications are relevant, as they provide the individual with fundamental knowledge of the components and different functions that fall under community development. However, the qualifications need to be standardised to reflect which of these disciplines would be most desirable and which could be relevant in case the ideal is not attained. At this level, a master's degree in social work is ideal, with additional training in management. A recommendation of this report is that a postgraduate qualification in social work and social development is most appropriate, since the scope of this discipline covers all the different aspects of community-based services, from direct service delivery, through casework and community development, to the management of social services. This study established that seven out of 11 DCDCs covered in the study have master's-level degrees, but these degrees are generic and not necessarily aligned to the job demands.

One of the identifiable gaps in the official qualifications and competencies listed in the job descriptions is the lack of reference to management and qualifications in the person specifications of the DCDO position. The belief that leadership and management knowledge and skills may be acquired through experience is misguided. While human resource development is the responsibility of the MoPS, this study found no information that the DCDOs had been trained in leadership or management before being appointed to their positions. Additional qualifications in management and leadership should be a prequalification for appointment to the position.

At this level, the following management and leadership competencies should be required.

##### **Knowledge of:**

- Existing national and international legal and human rights frameworks
- The Government's broad social development agenda
- General management and leadership principles and practices
- The roles and functions of other key players
- Global issues and their impact on the national development agenda
- Current trends in the social service workforce (practices and projections)

##### **Ability to:**

- Interpret relevant policy and national and international protocols
- Build and lead a team of professionals and clearly articulate the district vision for social development
- Articulate Government policies and communicate them to internal and external stakeholders
- Manage people
- Carry out trends analyses of social issues and derive meaningful conclusions
- Engage the public, build relationships, and cultivate a positive image of the district
- Apply results-based management principles and practices
- Use information, communication, and technology as aids in decision-making and information-sharing



- Negotiate with different stakeholders on behalf of the local government
- Analyze national policies and regional and international protocols to inform the design and delivery of social services
- Engage in continuous professional development
- Analyze documents, reports, etc. and advise staff on relevant issues

#### 4.5.2 Senior Probation and Social Welfare Officer

The specified qualifications for the Senior PSWO are too generalised to provide the requisite competencies for this position's function. "*An honours Bachelor degree of arts/social sciences, social work and social administration or development studies from a recognised University*" does not specify which of these arts/social science disciplines is most appropriate for the PSWO position, i.e., which disciplines best prepare candidates with the required skills and competencies to excel in that position. Similarly, the listed competencies are too generic in relation to the expected roles and functions of the PSWO. For example, while monitoring and evaluation are part and parcel of this job, no competencies are listed in relation to this area. Other core social work and community engagement competencies need to be underscored for this position. Abilities in coordination and networking, assessment, research, documentation, and report writing are all critical for this position. The child protection-focused competencies absolutely necessary for this position include assessment, the design and implementation support of OVC interventions, and case management in general. Knowledge of and skills in working with the justice system, and particularly, the juvenile justice system, are at the core of the position's probation function, as are the abilities to conduct independent assessments, research, and documentation, as well as the provisions of psychosocial support and child and family counselling.

Frontline workers in the social services, such as PSWOs, typically must have the knowledge, skills, and values to:

- perform complex assessments and make decisions at multiple levels within an ecological systems (person-in-environment) framework.
- They must also have interpersonal skills and personal resources for coping with stress and trauma, as well as skills in coordination and facilitation, and they must understand policy and linkages to various programmes and services.

#### 4.5.3 Probation and Social Welfare Officer

In terms of qualification, the PSWO should have a bachelor's degree in social work, social administration, child protection, or an equivalent qualification that combines social welfare and child protection. The competencies required at this level include the following knowledge and abilities.

##### **Adequate knowledge of:**

- National and international legal frameworks
- Child protection concerns and consequences of abuse, neglect, etc.
- Factors that increase vulnerability and their root causes
- A systems approach to social welfare and child protection
- A human rights-based approach to child protection programming
- Systems and structure of child protection systems
- Justice system and court procedures

**Ability to:**

- Acknowledge one's own limitations and be prepared to address them (personal development)
- Practice leadership as a value
- Present child protection concerns/issues verbally and in writing
- Develop professional relationships with a range of individuals at different levels of society
- Identify and use community-based resources
- Maintain up-to-date records
- Gather and process data for decision-making
- Report information accurately and in a timely manner

#### 4.5.4 Community Development Officer

In terms of qualifications, a bachelor's degree in social work and community development is desirable. In fact, this study has established that all the CDO participants had bachelor's degrees, with one having a master's degree in development studies. This level of training, accompanied by detailed induction and training in specific subject areas, such as child protection, law, and justice for children, would enhance the CDO's ability to handle child protection-related tasks. It must be appreciated that the position deals not only with probation but also with all aspects of child protection. In terms of technical support, the position needs more support and mentorship than any other in the community-based services structure.

The following competencies are considered critical for the CDO position.

**Knowledge of:**

- National and international legal frameworks (basic)
- Approaches to child protection programming
- Existing community care structures and their operations
- Community mobilisation approaches
- Traditional and emerging child protection issues
- Local justice systems (guidelines and procedures)
- Existing local partners engaged in child protection
- Case management principles and practice

**Ability to:**

- Generate a report (balancing social welfare, probation, and community development)
- Resist political influence regardless of source
- Communicate verbally and in writing
- Share information within ethically acceptable levels of confidentiality
- Proactively promote child participation by engaging children in decision-making on issues that affect them



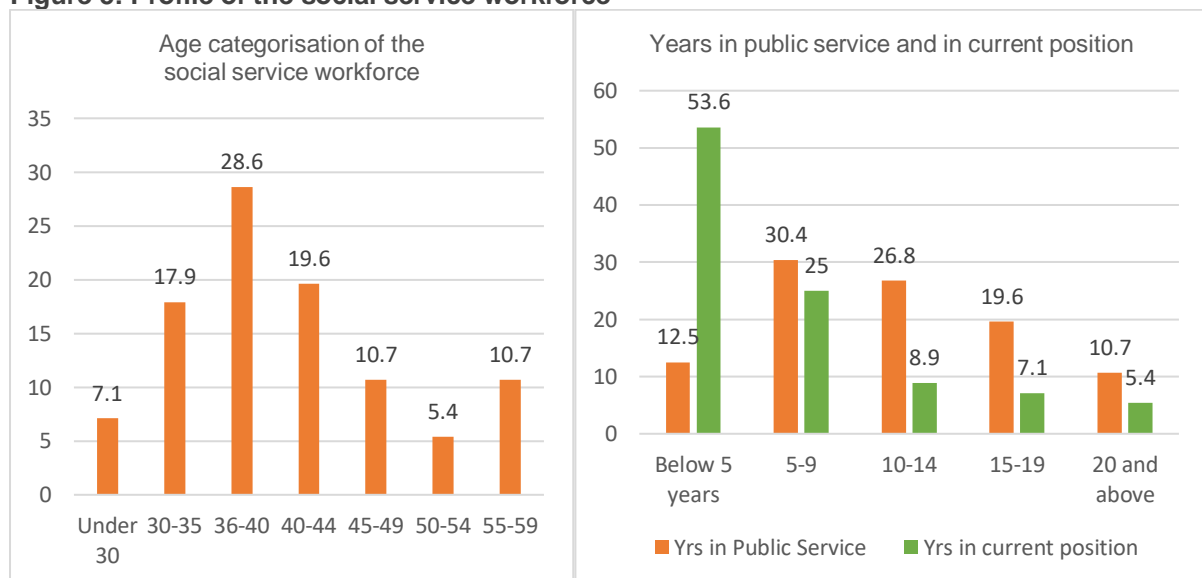
- Adopt culturally appropriate interventions in working with communities to address child protection issues
- Take prompt action to protect the rights of a child
- Use community-based resources effectively
- Identify perpetrators of child abuse
- Uphold child rights principles, including the best interests of the child
- Empathise with children without compromising professional ethics

## 4.6 Staffing analysis

### 4.6.1 Profile of the social service workforce

Although the study sample was somewhat limited for meaningful analysis, the available data showed a relatively young workforce, with 73% of workers below the age of 45 (Figure 5). There were also more males (57.1%) than females (42.9%) among members of the social service workforce.

**Figure 5: Profile of the social service workforce**



The majority of the social service workforce has spent an adequate number of years in public service to understand the system and comfortably work within its legal and policy framework and its operational structures and systems. Slightly over 30% of the 56 staff interviewed had been in public service between five and nine years, while only 12.5% had spent fewer than five years in public service. Conversely, more than half of the interviewees had spent fewer than five years in their current positions, which is indicative of ongoing recruitment and appointments. It could thus be asserted that social service workforce staff retention is relatively stable, despite qualitative arguments of high attrition rates. This finding presents opportunities for developing and supporting the workforce for more effective performance.

### 4.6.2 Staffing levels

The local government is responsible for the recruitment, deployment, and performance management of staff within the overall policy and guidelines stipulated by the MoPS. Staff must be recruited against the positions established by the MoPS for the local governments and within the available wage bill. The review found that the staff establishment, as well as

the number of filled positions within the community-based services department, were seriously inadequate for the effective delivery of services. Besides there being too few established positions to handle the workload, the fact that not all available positions are filled results in further human resource constraints. A number of staff, especially at the DCDO level, are working in an acting capacity due to a freeze on recruitment. The acting officers are, at the same time, expected to fulfil the roles of their substantive positions as well.

A rapid assessment of the staffing levels of the district social service workforce, conducted by 4Children and the MGLSD in 2018, showed, for example, that only 49% of DCDO positions in 121 districts were filled. Moreover, while 84% of Senior PSWO positions had substantive appointments, most of these officers (51%) have to double as acting DCDOs in the majority of districts, diminishing their functionality as Senior PSWOs due to the heavy workload. Table 5 shows the status of the staffing levels in 2018.

**Table 5: Staffing levels within the local government community-based services department**

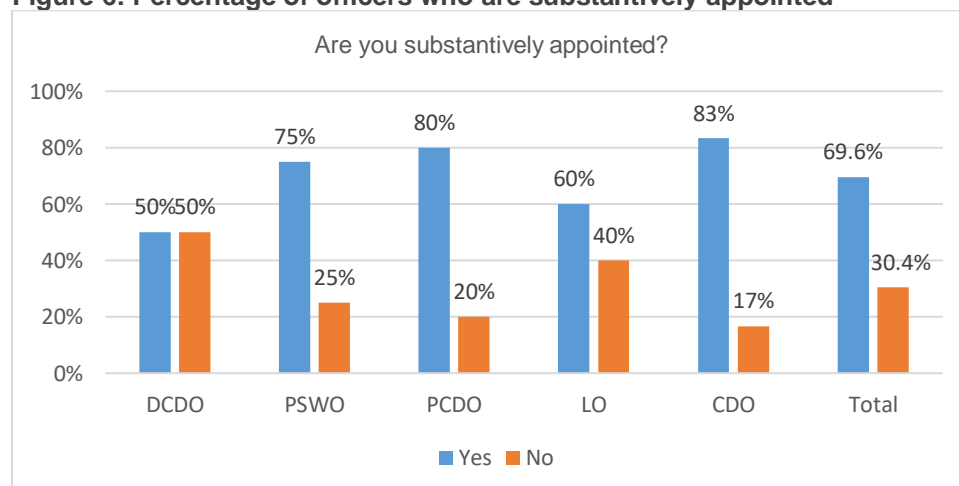
	Cadre/Title	Total no. of filled positions	Total no. of expected positions	% of Staffing Level
1	District Community Development Officer	59	121	49
2	Senior Probation and Social Welfare Officer	102	121	84
3	Probation and Social Welfare Officer	33	121	27
4	Senior Community Development Officer	183	0	0
5	Principal Community Development Officer	10	41	24
6	Labour Officer/Senior Labour Officer	40	0	0
7	Community Development Officer	1,079	1,317	82
8	Assistant Community Development Officer	310	746,911	4

Source: 4Children/MGLSD, 2018

The creation of the position of PSWO to assist the Senior PSWO is a positive development, but one that is still largely not operationalised, with just 27% (33 of the available 121 positions) filled as of June 2018. The other positions face similar challenges. Another study conducted under the Sustainable Outcomes for Children and Youth (SOCY) project (SOCY 2018) covering 19 districts found that only 12 out of the 19 districts met the 80% staffing target for the community-based services department.

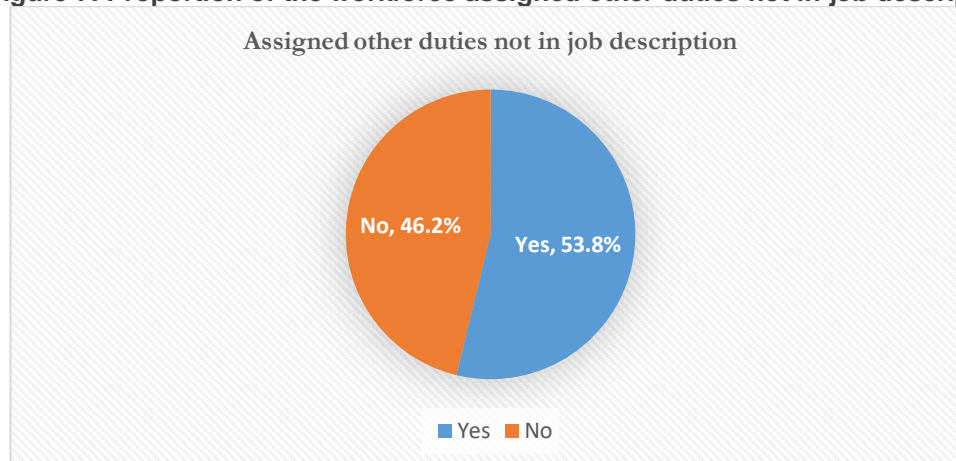
Findings from the functional review showed that 30% of the cadres that participated in the survey were not substantively appointed in their current positions, particularly the DCDOs (50%) and Labour Officers (40%). A quarter of PSWOs are also in an acting position. Figure 6 shows the findings regarding substantive appointments.

**Figure 6: Percentage of officers who are substantively appointed**



A number of factors have been highlighted as contributing to the situation, including: the lack of PCDO district positions that allow smooth career progression, inadequate qualifications of the cadres in acting/care-taking roles to be appointed in full capacity, delays by District Service Commissions in completing the recruitment processes for the roles, and limitations with the districts' wage bills. Due to inadequate staffing, most staff are actually playing more than one role and performing duties beyond what is formally prescribed in their job descriptions (see Figure 7). A common scenario cited by the review participants was that of CDOs serving as Senior Assistant Secretaries and Senior PSWOs taking on the roles of DCDOs.

**Figure 7: Proportion of the workforce assigned other duties not in job description**



Although it is unavoidable that social service workforce cadres perform duties other than or in addition to those prescribed in their job descriptions, this practice does affect their overall performance in as far as their mandate is concerned.

*Child protection actors have multiple roles, which makes them ineffective. Most times mothers go back with their children whom they bring to offices because the officer is performing another role such as acting as a sub county chief. (workshop participant)*

This multitasking can impact the effective delivery of services to children specifically and is made worse by the few staff recruited to handle child protection services.

#### 4.6.3 Qualifications, skills, and competencies

The review showed a highly qualified workforce as far as academic attainment is concerned, with 49 out of the 56 social service workforce participants having a bachelor's degree and 18 of them (32%) having master's-level training. The breakdown of qualifications by cadre is provided in Table 6. All CDOs who participated in the study had bachelor's-level training, one had a master's degree, and two out of the 12 had a postgraduate diploma. The cadre within the social service workforce with the highest number of staff having postgraduate-level training was the DCDO, which is a positive indicator of merit-based recruitment and/or professional development. Four out of 20 PSWOs also had a master's degree. Other acquired qualifications encompass short-term training at the certificate level.

**Table 6: Academic qualifications of the social service workforce**

Cadre	Master's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Postgraduate Diploma	Diploma	Other	N=
District Community Development Officer	58.3% (7)	91.7% (11)	16.7% (2)	0.0%	0.0%	12

Probation and Social Welfare Officer	20.0% (4)	95.0% (19)	40.0% (8)	15.0% (3)	0.0%	20
Principal Community Development Officer	80.0% (4)	80.0% (4)	40.0% (2)	20.0% (1)	20.0% (1)	5
Labour Officer	40.0% (2)	60.0% (3)	40.0% (2)	0.0%	0.0%	5
Community Development Officer	8.3% (1)	100.0% (12)	16.7% (2)	0.0%	0.0%	12
Others	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0% (2)	0.0%	2
<b>Total (N=56)</b>	<b>32.1% (18)</b>	<b>87.5% (49)</b>	<b>28.6% (16)</b>	<b>10.7% (6)</b>	<b>1.8% (1)</b>	<b>56</b>

Note: Multiple responses allowed.

With regard to qualifications in relevant disciplines, it could be argued that all the cadres participating in the study had background training in largely relevant disciplines, with the largest majority being qualified in the social sciences, followed by development studies. It is positive to note a number of cadres with background training in development studies, and a few in rural development and social sector planning and management, all of which are relevant in working with communities for development.

However, there is significantly low representation in professional social work, despite the fact that it would be one of the most relevant disciplines for the social service workforce in general. Social work is particularly relevant because community-based services tackle issues of vulnerability, marginalisation, and social exclusion and promote social justice and social change, areas that professional social work best addresses. Only eight out of the 56 participants (14%) had any background training specifically in social work. Of these, three were PSWOs. From a professional point of view, social work currently provides the strongest repertoire of knowledge, skills, and values for the social service workforce, particularly those whose mandates relate directly to working with vulnerable populations. Specifically, child care and protection constitute a key area of professional social work training. Hence, ideally, background training in social work would provide a strong basis for equipping the workforce with specific practical skills and competencies to more effectively assess child protection issues and to design, deliver, monitor, and evaluate interventions for children. A social work qualification is particularly important for the probation and social welfare function at all levels. This recommendation does not in any way discount the relevance of other disciplines, since the social service workforce performs most effectively in multidisciplinary settings. A summary of discipline qualifications by cadre is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Specific discipline qualifications of the social service workforce**

Cadre	Master's Degree	Bachelor's Degree Level	Other Postgraduate Diploma
<b>District Community Development Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Studies (2)</li> <li>• Public Administration (1)</li> <li>• Rural Development (1)</li> <li>• Management (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Studies (1)</li> <li>• Community Development (1)</li> <li>• Social Work (1)</li> <li>• Social Sciences (7)</li> <li>• Public Administration (1)</li> <li>• Community Psychology (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Planning &amp; Management (1)</li> <li>• Education (1)</li> </ul>
<b>Senior Probation and Social Welfare Officer/</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Studies (3)</li> <li>• Social Sector Planning &amp; Management (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts in Arts (1)</li> <li>• Social Sciences (9)</li> <li>• Community Development (1)</li> <li>• Development Studies (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Justice (1)</li> <li>• Project Planning &amp; Management (5)</li> <li>• Gender Studies (2)</li> </ul>

<b>Probation and Social Welfare Officer</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education (1)</li> <li>• Community Psychology (1)</li> <li>• Adult Education (1)</li> <li>• Social Work (3)</li> </ul>	
<b>Principal Community Development Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Studies (4)</li> <li>• Social Sector Planning &amp; Management (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Sciences (4)</li> <li>• Social Work (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling (1)</li> </ul>
<b>Senior Community Development Officer/Community Development Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Studies (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Studies (1)</li> <li>• Social Sciences (8)</li> <li>• Social Work (2)</li> <li>• Psychology (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Administration (1)</li> <li>• Project Planning &amp; Management (1)</li> <li>• Human Resource Management (1)</li> </ul>
<b>Labour Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban Planning (1)</li> <li>• Development Studies (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Development (1)</li> <li>• Social Sciences (2)</li> <li>• Education (1)</li> <li>• Social Work (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and Evaluation (1)</li> <li>• Public Administration (1)</li> </ul>

The low numbers of cadres with a professional social work background may not be due entirely to a lack of qualified social workers but rather to the limited understanding of the differences in professional mandates, especially between related social science and humanities disciplines. This limited understanding has subsequently led to something of an open-door policy in terms of job qualifications, as evidenced in the current local government job descriptions.

A study on the social service workforce undertaken by SOCY (2018) covering 19 districts similarly reported that 60% of the current community development workers lacked background training in social work and also lacked soft skills (e.g., psychosocial, counselling, and guidance) to effectively provide social services for OVC and their households. According to the same study, only 37% of CDOs who received in-service training on child care and protection under the Strengthening Uganda's National Response for Implementation of Services to Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (SUNRISE-OVC) project offered by Makerere University are still active in service.

Another notable issue is the paucity of additional qualifications in juvenile justice and other law-related courses, especially required for PSWOs who work with the justice, law and order sector. Only one out of 56 participants (a PSWO) had a postgraduate diploma in social justice, a course previously offered at the Nsamizi Training Institute of Social Development that covers aspects of family services and the law.

## 4.7 Work environment of the workforce

The delivery of child protection services has been facilitated by a number of factors, including an enabling legal and policy environment, the presence of many different actors who complement governmental efforts, resources from development partners, existent coordination mechanisms at the national and local government levels, and a relatively positive community sanction for the work of child protection actors. However, the organisational environment, the lack of adequate financial and logistical support, and myriad other factors affect performance.

### 4.7.1 Organisational culture

Organisational culture refers to the chosen way an organisation conducts its business. It is the sum of written and unwritten rules, norms, and values that are accepted by employees and management as informing the way of working. For example, most public institutions are described as bureaucratic, more reactive than proactive, prone to low staff morale, careless

in their management approach, entrenched in ideas and habits, and reluctant to change, and they often operate with little budget to no budget. This kind of organisational culture often becomes accepted, and efforts aimed at changing these beliefs are usually met with heavy resistance.

In reference to Uganda's public services, anecdotal evidence suggests that public services, including at both the central and local government levels, are characterised by a culture similar to the one described above. Based on evidence generated during the consultative process, the prevailing culture could be described as one of mediocrity, with poor time management (as evidenced during the workshops), low levels of individual responsibility and accountability (for example, only 11 out of 23 districts submitted district information sheets that were requested beforehand), low levels of innovation and creativity, and rigid and complex rules that inform decision-making and action.

Regarding the work environment of the social service workforce, it appears normal for social services staff to use their own money, such as by buying airtime for mobile phones, to conduct Government business and to work with limited resources to deliver social services. Because services are delivered with minimal to no resources, senior leaders relax their resource mobilisation responsibilities, and as a result, a culture of professional abuse creeps in. From interactions the consultants have had with various officers, a careless management attitude is evident when statements such as, "this is government and cannot be hurried into doing anything" are made. Furthermore, the core responsibility of managing performance has apparently been abandoned, and this abandonment has become an acceptable behaviour—now merely part of the "way we work here."

As much as such a culture develops through written procedures, rules, and practices, the major culprit is leadership, which contributes significantly to introducing and perpetuating certain values and norms perceived to be right. Phrases such as "that was under that management, this is new regime" without a careful analysis of the subject at hand are common. If, for example, a Permanent Secretary tends to bypass senior management in certain decision-making processes, those direct reports will give up on their decision-making authority because the leader has set a precedent.

#### 4.7.2 Other factors that impact the effective functioning of the social service workforce

Constraints to social service workforce efficacy mostly take the form of inadequate financial and human resources; limited appreciation and prioritisation of child protection in national and local government budgets and plans; extremely poor working environments, including inadequate and child-unfriendly physical spaces; and lack of basic tools and equipment, including computers, Internet access, and other communication equipment. These constraints compromise access to information, communication, and reporting, as well as routine office work and the ethical provision of child-friendly, professional services.

*Probation officers should have children play equipment, counselling rooms, rooms for lactating mothers and there should be a waiting place but not people waiting under the trees or listening in office as you handle other cases. (PSWO)*

The lack of adequate staff to handle very heavy workloads leads to burnout, while extremely poor remuneration leads to high attrition levels. Little attention has been paid to the qualifications and competencies of the individuals recruited and deployed in the community-based services department.

### 4.8 Visibility of child protection in programming and resource allocation



*What I have seen, child protection has ah...you see how I am in this small office in a very big organisation that is how child protection is in the district or even the ministry. Other functions seem to overshadow child protection; someone who is doing community development for example is very powerful than probation. So, it is like my opinion is how community development is a department, also probation has to have its own department. (key informant, human resource manager).*

In line with participatory planning within the local governments, all units contribute to the district and sub-county workplans. Hence, the district plans do reflect the community-based services department plans, including the plans of specific units, such as probation and social welfare. Examples from three selected districts (Kabarole, Pader, and Mbarara) show that the PSWO workplans do in fact reflect major child protection roles and activities, including probation-related activities. However, these plans are barely realised due to financial and human resources shortages, in addition to other logistics issues. For example, a review of the five-year development plan for Mbarara district (2010–2015) showed that eight out of the 14 indicators listed for the PSWO scored less than 40% in terms of output performance in the five-year period, with areas such as support to community-based child protection volunteers scoring 0%, similar to the score for the establishment of reception centres and remand homes. Court inquiries (36%) and family visits for reunification, counselling and arbitration (30%) also lag (Mbarara district development plan, 2016/2020). Another example of the invisibility of child protection within workplans and budgets can be found in Ntoroko district's 2018/2019 workplan: only three child protection-related items are covered, namely: 1) tracing and resettlement, 2) conducting follow-ups of emergency cases of juveniles and other abandoned children at the sub-county, Family and settle them, and 3) training of CDOs in the Orphans and Vulnerable Children Management Information System (OVCMIS). Of these items, the last two are not allocated any budget, while the first is allocated a paltry UGX 2,000,000 for the whole year for the entire district (Ntoroko annual workplan, 2018/2019).

A major challenge concerns the allocation of resources to facilitate implementation of the plans. Community-based services in general lack any meaningful financial or other resources to fulfil the mandate. Table 8 shows the total budget allocations from all sources (i.e., from central government transfers, locally generated funds, and other sources) for the districts that participated in the functional review consultations.

**Table 8: Cumulative receipts by selected local government community-based services departments, FY 2017/18**

District	Cumulative Receipts by End of March for FY 2017/18 (UGX)	Community-Based Services (UGX)	Probation and Child and Welfare (UGX)		
			Actual	% of total local government budget	As a % of community-based services
<b>Amudat</b>	6,278,683	1,261,837	80,115	1.28%	6.35%
<b>Bukomansimbi</b>	9,942,686	54,386	750	0.01%	1.38%
<b>Kabarole</b>	23,079,011	345,004	857	0.00%	0.25%
<b>Kaabong</b>	16,226,077	720,764	4,500	0.03%	0.62%
<b>Kapchorwa</b>	10,719,003	204,310	2,250	0.02%	1.10%
<b>Kisoro</b>	21,495,785	305,803	53,809	0.25%	17.6%
<b>Kumi</b>	15,532,465	91,652	19,875	0.13%	21.69%
<b>Lamwo</b>	10,882,757	202,355	888	0.01%	0.44%
<b>Lira</b>	25,314,858	602,803	4,200	0.02%	0.70%
<b>Luuka</b>	14,183,877	113,584	2,888	0.02%	2.54%
<b>Masindi</b>	17,032,353	418,113	27,736	0.16%	6.63%



<b>Mayuge</b>	22,651,362	824,981	223,872	0.99%	27.14%
<b>Mbale</b>	30,698,981	1,202,449	5,250	0.02%	0.44%
<b>Mbarara</b>	25,365,722	417,358	6,324	0.02%	1.52%
<b>Mpigi</b>	18,043,863	572,726	1,488	0.01%	0.26%
<b>Mukono</b>	27,488,202	393,357	35,850	0.13%	9.11%
<b>Nebbi</b>	20,020,408	357,736	1,500	0.01%	0.42%
<b>Ntoroko</b>	6,244,040	214,065	9,000	0.14%	4.20%
<b>Pader</b>	19,192,595	1,328,938	10,699	0.06%	0.81%
<b>Sironko</b>	18,704,643	368,526	375	0.00%	0.10%
<b>Soroti</b>	17,752,224	217,119	1,200	0.01%	0.55%
<b>Wakiso</b>	51,214,863	1,649,179	154,354	0.30%	9.36%
<b>Yumbe</b>	27,768,517	1,226,794	7,511	0.03%	0.61%

*Source: Figures extracted from district workplans, 2018/2019*

As evident in the figures, in almost all districts presented, probation and social welfare receives less than 1% of the total local government budget, and in 11 of the 23 indicated districts, the probation and social welfare unit likewise receives less than 1% of the departmental budget. Only Kumi and Mayuge districts allocate more than 20% of the community-based services department budget to probation and social welfare. Similar to the central government level, where the MGLSD is one of the least funded ministries, receiving no more than 1% of the national budget, its representative sector at the local government level is likewise among the least funded. The probation and social welfare office is not prioritised at all within the community-based services department. The lack of funding and other resources was cited as the leading constraint to the delivery of child protection services in general and to the functioning of the social service workforce in particular.

*The budget for probation services is there but realisation of the funds is the issue. And how we work, we volunteer and simply rely on salaries. Some of us are there because we have the passion. Since 2015 my office has been allocated 250,000 Ugandan shillings so how do you expect someone to run through Mayuge just for that. To the consulting team, can you sample some districts and come and see the offices we are working in? Maybe that will give you an emotional report. (regional workshop participant)*

*I will speak for Kampala; since 2001, I have never got any shilling to my office, but I am only supported by the IPs. If a child is abused somewhere I call some NGO [nongovernmental organisation] and ask if they have a car. I only work in my office, so I handle cases that come to me; for those that require field work, I follow up on phone using my own airtime. So, we work by begging from the implementing partners. (regional workshop participant)*

*Inadequate funding - We receive money, but child care and protection is not given priority. The district councils are not committed at making budgetary allocations to child care and protection. (workshop participant)*

The low level of resources not only affects staff morale and performance but also contributes to high attrition levels. It was reported that lack of financing of child protection and welfare services results in local government staff engaging in side jobs or even paying more allegiance to nongovernmental organisation projects, for which they receive allowances and tools to implement or monitor activities, even if these might not form part of their overall mandates. It was also noted that the PSWOs take on acting roles, such as being focal persons for funded projects including the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), YLP, and others, at the expense of direct child protection services. This action is not only to augment their personal incomes but also to be more actively engaged.

The extremely low visibility of child protection in district budgets reflects the low acknowledgement and prioritisation of child protection by the local governments, which directly impacts the effective functioning of the social service workforce in relation to child protection.

#### 4.9 District-level communication and coordination

At the district level, the most active coordination structure for child protection is the District Chain-Linked Committee, chaired by the highest ranking judicial officer in the district, such as the Grade One Magistrate or the Chief Magistrate (justice, law and order sector). The District Chain-Linked Committee brings together all stakeholders involved in justice administration and reform within the district, including police, courts, the probation and social welfare office, and nongovernmental actors. The committee meets on a monthly or quarterly basis, depending on the district's ability. The scope of child protection issues discussed and resolved in these committees largely depends on the active participation by the PSWOs. The district and sub-county OVC committees augment the coordination of child care and protection by specifically bringing together OVC actors, including IPs. Both committees are supported to hold quarterly meetings, but in such a way that the issues raised and not resolved through the sub-county OVC committees can be discussed at the district level. At the community level, child protection committees serve as a coordination structure to identify, address, and/or refer child protection issues to the next levels.

Evidently, a lot of effort has been placed in creating coordination mechanisms at different levels, which would appear positive. In fact, consultations with social service workforce participants and other stakeholders did reveal the usefulness of these structures in enhancing the delivery of services for children.

*DCC [District Chain-Linked Committee] meetings have strengthened dispensation of justice for children... They visit institutions like prisons and raise issues with all members at the base. Their effectiveness has had real interventions and far reaching impact. (prisons official)*

*Coordination has promoted the working of police and probation officers in tracking and resettling children except that some of these processes take long. Referrals come in handy we refer some cases to relevant institutions without hitting a dead end. We work more closely with the with DPP, judiciary and the legal aid clinics offering pro bono (free legal) services. (CFPU official)*

*They are serious, they meet and discuss issuers of child protection and care in the division and some of the issues cannot be handled at the decision level they fit into the city coordination discussing level. (PSWO, Kampala City Council Authority [KCCA])*

*Yes, they are there because you cannot sit without facilitation; we have always requested IPs to fund, like in Busukuma and Masulita, some IPs have been helping us to fund these meetings but if they have not facilitated you and you haven't gotten an IP to do that, some people take long so they do not meet as required. Even ours some IPs help us if we don't have money in that quarter, so we ask them to fund it; of course, it is not so much money. When you talk to an IP and they have money they can help us but if we had IPF [Indicative Planning Framework] allocated to these committees, they would be very functional, but they are there though not so functional. (CAO)*

*When we started getting some funding from IDI [Infectious Disease Institute], to cause these meetings sit, they have been sitting and taking actions of certain issues that arise. The only challenge I foresee is when IDI stops funding us, for those committees to sit, and if it stops and we fail to get funding from other partners, but apparently, they do meet. (KCCA official)*

The culture of constituting project-based coordination mechanisms, which duplicate roles and resources, increases the work burden for participating stakeholders and lacks sustainability; this culture is still prevalent at the district level. At the district and lower local government level, the district and sub-county OVC committees were established by the USAID-funded SUNRISE

project and appeared to work very effectively during the life of the project. While these structures still exist, their functionality has diminished due to lack of funding to convene meetings. The different philosophies and approaches advanced by different development partners tend to be reflected in the multiple coordination structures set up at different levels, and this weakens rather than strengthens the coordination for child protection.

Other challenges to coordination are the overemphasis on committee meetings as the mode of coordination and the neglect of other aspects of coordination, such as prompt communication; the lack of streamlined roles, responsibilities, and functions that cause issues of duplication; weak referral systems that require strengthening; and the lack of information-sharing.

#### **4.10 Reporting and information-sharing**

The MGLSD has developed a number of management information systems (MISs) that have facilitated easier, more coordinated, and more harmonised reporting. These systems include the OVCMIS, the Remand Home Management Information System (RHMIS), and the Gender Based Violence Management Information System (GBVMIS). The online systems ensure the timely capturing and reporting of similar information from all districts and lower local governments.

*The RHMIS and OVCMIS under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development has helped us to somehow coordinate with the Ministry of Gender, especially as regards to reporting cases of child abuse. (regional workshop participant)*

If well managed, synthesised, and analysed, the information collected through existing reporting mechanisms is capable of supporting evidence-based decision-making at all levels, since data are collected at the community level. One of the challenges noted by community-based services department workforce staff is the existence of multiple reporting systems within the same department, namely, the OVCMIS, GBVMIS, RHMIS, YLP MIS, and UWEP MIS, among others. The systems are not interlinked, which in some cases, leads to duplication. Some critical issues surrounding child protection, such as children in conflict and in contact with the law, are not adequately captured by the OVCMIS. According to the SDSP, the MGLSD is working on an integrated system of information management that will harmonise existing MIS sub-systems (i.e., the OVCMIS, the National Adult Literacy MIS [NALMIS], GBVMIS, the Labour Market MIS [LMMIS], the Occupational Safety and Health MIS [OSHMIS], the SAGE MIS, the YLP MIS, the UWEP MIS, the Community Based Rehabilitation MIS [CBR MIS], Community Information Systems, and the Child Helpline MIS) and will feed data into the comprehensive sector MIS. Interviews with the leadership of the Directorate of Social Protection suggested that this process is already underway.

There is also the issue of some social service workforce cadres being not adequately oriented and mentored in the MISs; this problem is exacerbated by the frequent changes made to the systems, which ideally would require refresher orientation sessions. The most affected by this limited technical capacity are the CDOs at the sub-county level. Other challenges are the lack of adequate equipment and services, such as computers and Internet services, to enable timely reporting. A significant issue regarding reporting is the very limited feedback received from the centre regarding submitted reports and information.

Although the issue of reporting has been mentioned in earlier discussions, it is important to emphasise that sharing of reports goes beyond line responsibilities to include those with functional relationships. While the CAO is ultimately responsible for the administrative functioning of community-based services, the department has an obligation to share technical reports with the MGLSD at regular or set intervals. The MGLSD must take keen interest in the technical performance of the community-based services department, since this is how the SDSP is operationalised through actual services.

#### 4.11 Capacity-building for the social service workforce

The MoPS has a public service training policy that guides capacity-building actions for all cadres in the public services. The policy emphasises a demand-driven approach, where identified training needs of both the individual Government officials and the Government ministries, departments, and agencies determine the training agenda. The MoLG's National Local Government Capacity Building Policy (2013) considers capacity-building in a much broader and holistic sense, encompassing all of the factors that affect the performance of local governments as institutions and their stakeholders. These factors include: the work environment, the availability of resources, the availability of tools and equipment, staffing, work ethics, management systems and procedures, and human resources knowledge and skills. Eligible training activities include induction, orientation and sensitisation, performance improvement, professional/career development, and staff exchange (attachments and secondments). A coordination unit, the Local Government Capacity Building Unit in the MoLG, is responsible for coordinating and formulating strategies for capacity-building, as well as for coordinating a national capacity-building steering committee.

According to the MoLG guidelines, districts and municipal/town councils are expected to develop five-year capacity-building action plans that are integrated into the five-year development plans of local governments. The policy seeks to address some challenges within the local government structures, including: the inability of local governments to fill established positions; the low retention of workers; the failure to attract and retain highly qualified staff; the lack of adequate tools, equipment, and facilities to enable the delivery of services;; the absence of a training needs assessment and the poor alignment of the capacity-building planning cycle with the training; and the emergence of new areas of intervention, which require specialised skills.

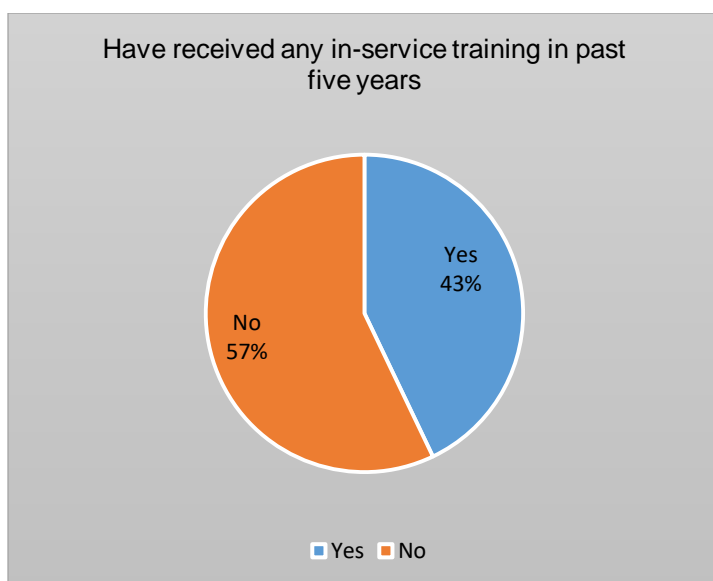
Conversely, the MGLSD, as the technical ministry, is responsible for building the capacity of the social service workforce in relevant technical areas and for orienting staff in the relevant legal and policy framework and guidelines to enable them to effectively perform their duties.

According to functional review findings, the social service workforce is aware of the different provisions for capacity-building and their right to access training that is critical for improving their performance. Existing opportunities for training as a component of capacity-building within the local governments include: the institution of a capacity-building grant that staff can apply for; training committees; short courses organised through the MGLSD and through development partners, such as the diploma in social justice; short certificate courses in child protection; and other trainings arranged via different fora, including workshops and seminars.

##### 4.11.1 In-service training

Findings of the review showed that 43% of the sampled social service workforce has received some form of in-service training, as shown in Figure 8.

**Figure 8: Proportion of the social service workforce who have received any form of in-service training in the past five years**



PSWOs had the highest proportion of those who had undertaken relevant in-service training (50%), followed by DCDOs and CDOs (41%), with the least training recorded among Labour Officers (20%, i.e., one out of five). The specific areas of training in relation to child protection are indicated in Table 9.

**Table 9: Child protection-related training received by social service workforce cadres**

Area of Training	N=	%
Reporting, referral, and follow-up	30	63.8%
Case management	28	59.6%
Community mobilisation	25	53.2%
Child protection	38	80.9%
Alternative care	19	40.4%
Child safeguarding	5	10.6%
Justice for children	9	19.1%

*Note: Multiple responses were allowed*

Among those who had received in-service training, there was a reasonable focus on different aspects of child protection. Most participants revealed that training in child protection was received as a single package, with the most cited training being the professional certificate in child protection offered by Makerere University, offered first under the SUNRISE project and later as an independent course. There is clear gap in training regarding justice for children, where only 19.1% was indicated. This represents a gap in ensuring effective child protection services, particularly for children who are in conflict or contact with the law. Understanding justice for children is also important in other settings where child rights are violated and their needs are not met. Alternative care training is also underrepresented, with only 40.4% of the responses indicating exposure, despite the fact that the alternative care framework has existed since 2012 and over the years, there has been increasing emphasis on the continuum of care. To effectively operationalise and fulfil functions in line with the alternative care framework, there is a definite need for the social service workforce to receive in-depth training and orientation in this area. This training need applies not only to PSWOs but to all cadres of the social service workforce because they also perform duties and responsibilities that relate directly to components of the alternative care framework.

#### 4.11.2 Orientation on key legal and policy framework

Apart from formal, short-term training, another form of capacity-building, that of orientation on the legal and policy framework and on key guidelines and regulations, is generally lacking. As shown in chapter three, the findings revealed that among a sample of 56 members of the social service workforce, only 21% had been oriented in the Children (Amendment) Act. Most of those oriented in the Act were PSWOs, while there was a clear gap in orientation among the rest of the cadres, including DCDOs and CDOs, at all levels. It could be assumed that the district staff, including DCDOs and PSWOs, cascade the orientation to CDOs, but this is apparently not happening due, in part, to the lack of time, resources, and orientation at the district level.

The fact that the amendment's provisions took effect immediately meant that the lack of orientation of the workforce had immediate impact on the way staff carried out their duties and functions in regard to child care and protection. Qualitative findings confirmed this situation.

*Some (changes in laws and policies) require new approaches and skills yet refresher courses are rare at local government levels. (workshop participant)*

*Limited knowledge on new legal frameworks due to lack of orientation. There are some probation officers who have been recruited but have never been trained on how to do their work. (workshop participant)*

In one of the regional workshops in the northern region, a whole group of CDOs admitted that they were not aware of any changes or amendments made to the Children Act. Some police CFPU were likewise not aware of these changes, and although CFPU staff are not directly part of the community-based services department, they are significant partners in child protection. Interviews with some CFPU officials revealed glaring gaps in knowledge of the legal and policy framework for child protection. These officials tend to concentrate mostly on the Penal Code (Amendment) Act 2007 and other guidelines and regulations within the UPF. This finding is worrisome because the police CFPU are increasingly playing roles that go beyond investigation into many aspects of child protection in general, which require professional knowledge and abilities.

#### 4.11.3 Individual effort towards capacity development

Most of the efforts by the social service workforce to develop their capacity are geared towards formal professional training, especially at the postgraduate level. The individuals who had any postgraduate training, either at the postgraduate diploma or master's degree level, achieved it through their own initiative and individual effort. Staff also try to acquaint themselves with relevant regulatory frameworks to more appropriately perform their duties. There was no mention of making use of available, relevant online courses or of participating in seminars, workshops, or conferences that are not necessarily arranged within the line of duty, yet all of these present opportunities for self-directed continuous professional and capacity development.

Major constraints towards capacity-building include: inadequate resources to implement capacity-building plans, coupled with the diversification of capacity-building grant resources;; lack of transparency in the selection process for training/scholarships; and limited information-sharing about available opportunities by those in charge of training and other capacity-building initiatives. A critical gap is the absence of a regulatory framework for mandatory continuous professional development among the social service workforce, as part of performance-based management. In other contexts, such as South Africa, the social service workforce has to annually demonstrate a minimum number of continuous professional development points earned through the year to renew their license as practicing social workers. This requirement challenges not only on the employing organisation but also the individual to be more proactive.



#### 4.11.4 Training needs

Table 10 presents a summary matrix of priority training needs among the different cadres.

**Table 10: Priority training needs among the social service workforce**

<b>District Community Development Officer</b>	<b>Probation and Social Welfare Officer</b>	<b>Principal Community Development Officer</b>	<b>Labour Officer</b>	<b>Community Development Officer</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data management and reporting</li> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Juvenile justice</li> <li>• Labour and employment</li> <li>• Strategic planning</li> <li>• Project and programme evaluation</li> <li>• Child care and protection</li> <li>• Tracing and reintegration</li> <li>• Social justice and human rights</li> <li>• Financial management</li> <li>• Social protection</li> <li>• Interpersonal relations</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• Project planning and management</li> <li>• Probation, children and youth</li> <li>• Performance management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Data collection, management, and analysis</li> <li>• Lobbying and advocacy</li> <li>• Reporting, referral, and networking</li> <li>• Counselling and guidance</li> <li>• Child protection</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Family and juvenile law</li> <li>• Social justice and human rights</li> <li>• Resource mobilisation</li> <li>• Conflict resolution skills</li> <li>• Coordination skills</li> <li>• Report writing</li> <li>• Computer skills</li> <li>• Early childhood development</li> <li>• Child psychology</li> <li>• Addressing gender-based and domestic violence</li> <li>• Ethics and values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• Justice for children/ juvenile justice</li> <li>• Alternative care</li> <li>• Administration and management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child protection</li> <li>• Alternative care</li> <li>• Occupational safety and health</li> <li>• Computation of workman's compensation</li> <li>• Child labour in child-headed households</li> <li>• Child criminal liability</li> <li>• Child labour in the informal sector</li> <li>• Legal and policy framework</li> <li>• Sign language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Probing skills</li> <li>• Resource mobilisation</li> <li>• Child safeguarding</li> <li>• Mobilisation</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Facilitation skills</li> <li>• Child protection</li> <li>• Social networking</li> <li>• Alternative care</li> <li>• Counselling skills</li> <li>• Negotiation and management of conflict</li> <li>• Reporting</li> <li>• Representation of children in conflict with the law</li> <li>• Gender and human rights</li> </ul>

Based on the self-reported training needs, as well as considering the nature of their work, the following are considered to be the highest priority areas for training and capacity development for social service workforce staff in relation to child protection:

1. Child protection and safeguarding
2. Case management (with particular emphasis on assessment skills)
3. Family services, the law, and juvenile justice
4. Alternative care



5. Leadership and management skills
6. Community mobilisation
7. Reporting, referral, and networking
8. Resource mobilisation
9. Advocacy
10. Partnership development
11. Monitoring and evaluation
12. Gender and child protection
13. Communication skills (especially behaviour change communication and communicating with children)
14. Project planning and management
15. Work stress and self-care

#### 4.11.5 Self-assessed level of competence among social service workforce cadres

In response to a question on levels of skills and competencies to execute their duties, the social service workforce cadres fairly rated their competencies, with close to 70% stating that they have good knowledge and skills to perform their duties and rarely need help. However, only a few (3.6%) claimed expert knowledge and skills in their respective jobs. The self-rating was highest among DCDOs and lowest among CDOs, half of whom stated that they have fair knowledge and skills to perform but require regular support. Table 11 shows the details.

**Table 11: Self-assessed competence levels among the social service workforce**

Level	DCDO	PSWO	PCDO	Labour Officer	CDO	Other	Total
I have fair knowledge and skills to perform my job but require regular support.	25%	15%	0%	40%	50%	50%	26.8%
I have good knowledge and skills to perform my job. I rarely need help/support.	75%	80%	100%	40%	50%	50%	69.6%
I have very good knowledge, and I am very confident of my skills in this job. I provide expert advice to other colleagues.	-	5%	-	20%	-	-	3.6%

#### 4.11.6 Capacity-building (training and development) strategy or approaches

Traditional approaches to training and development included classroom learning, seminars, workshops, and secondments. All of these approaches address knowledge and information needs, skills development, and behaviour changes. While these methods have been proved successful through ages of application, other approaches such as coaching, mentoring, and induction, which are associated with leadership roles, are less frequently used, especially in the public services. During the consultative process, there was strong demand for induction or orientation, especially for new entrants as it was in the past. While coaching and mentorship have been identified as valid methods, especially in the National Local Government Capacity Building Policy (2013), none of the officers covered in this study had been exposed to coaching or mentorship. This finding obviously creates a gap in terms of converting knowledge acquired

through seminars and other formal training approaches into competencies or skills required to execute a task effectively. It will be important therefore to adopt a capacity-building approach that combines a range of techniques and approaches that support the effective transmission of information, promote cognitive transformation, strengthen the application of knowledge and skills, and encourage changes in work-related behaviours.

## 5. Managing Performance

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Broadly, performance-based management is a systematic approach to performance improvement through an ongoing process of establishing strategic performance objectives; measuring performance; collecting, analyzing, reviewing, and reporting performance data; and using that data to drive improvement. In Uganda, public service regulations serve as a primary guide for government ministries in developing and implementing their performance management systems. These regulations are provided in the Integrated Performance Management Framework and are further articulated in *Staff Performance Appraisal for Public Service: Guidelines for Managers and Staff* (2007). As discussed earlier, it is the responsibility of the MoPS to develop and install a public service performance management system.

The Ugandan Government adopted a full performance management cycle that culminates in a performance appraisal at the end of each performance period. In general, a performance appraisal is an instrument used by organisations to evaluate the performance of their employees in terms of quality, quantity, cost, and time. Performance appraisal (or review) activities include documenting achieved results and indicating if standards were met or not, as well as creating some form of a development plan to address insufficient performance (Maheshwari 2002, cited in Mpanga 2009). The process involves regular, formal interaction between a subordinate and supervisor in the civil service, where the work performance of the subordinate is evaluated. While performance-based management is often focused on human resources, performance does not occur in a vacuum. Hence, underperformance or performance gaps do not always indicate a problem on the part of the individual or unit, but rather they could be a sign of unrealistic performance standards or the lack of adequate resources to fulfil plans and targets (McNamara 2008: 181–198, cited in Mpanga 2009).

### 5.1 Implementation of performance-based management

The MoPS designed a set of tools and guidelines to aid the process of performance-based appraisal. There are standard guidelines and forms, as well as standardised performance planning tools to guide the cycle of performance appraisal. The MoPS Staff Performance Appraisal Guidelines for Managers and Staff (2007) outline the principles, benefits, and processes for conducting performance appraisals for both central and local government staff. A set of 17 competencies are measured in the performance appraisal: leadership; professional knowledge; planning; organising and coordinating; decision-making; human resource management; training and mentoring; financial management; teamwork; initiative; innovation; communication; management; time management; customer care; loyalty; result orientation, and integrity (MoPS 2007).

A single performance management system has been adopted across all public service institutions, including the local government. According to a literature review and confirmed through interviews, the Uganda performance management system is results-oriented by design. The design reflects international best practices, as it presents a significant shift of focus from inputs and activities to outputs and outcomes. This shift is in line with results-oriented management, which places more emphasis on accountability for results and less on performance-related financial rewards. The implementation of the system is designed to result in greater efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and access to improved customer-centred

public services. In practical terms, this change in approach places the responsibility for implementing the systems on line managers as a routine performance management function.

The system, among other best practices, provides:

- a) A continuous process of dialogue between direct reports and their supervisors—a process that should culminate in an annual appraisal
- b) A basis for making human resources decisions, such as rewards or sanctions (as outlined in the Rewards and Sanctions Framework), promotions, recognition, and training needs
- c) A set of tools and procedures provided by the MoPS to guide the process of managing performance
- d) A follow-up mechanism for the MoPS to provide technical backstopping to implementing ministries, ensuring that the system is implemented according to its technical design
- e) A set of competencies (17) to guide monitoring, appraisal, and performance improvement planning stages in the performance management system cycle
- f) A linkage between performance and other nonfinancial forms of rewards—the system makes no mention of any increment in salary as a result of good performance other than bonuses.

In addition, the Government introduced client services charters, output-oriented budgeting, and rewards and sanctions schemes as support processes and mechanisms to emphasise the orientation towards results. However, based on a review of the performance management system design and the interviews conducted, it is argued that:

- a) Performance management does not fulfil its purpose, as human resource decisions are rarely based on the results of the appraisal. For example, performance appraisal exercises are often conducted ex post, when staff are to be confirmed or promoted.
- b) According to Circular Standing Instruction No. 1 of 2011: Rewards and Sanctions Framework, the following weaknesses were identified (quote):
  - *The rewards have not been applied in a standard manner across the Service.*
  - *The rewards are not significant enough to cause change in behaviour and to encourage exertion of extra effort.*
  - *The criteria for nominating best performers has been challenged, resulting in discontent.*
  - *The criteria for reward or recognition places little emphasis on promoting innovativeness.*
  - *The focus on rewarding individuals does not allow enough recognition of the collective and collaborative efforts by teams to deliver key outputs.*
- c) There are constant deviations from planned activities through the 'any other duties' clause in job descriptions, making it difficult for officers to deliver planned outputs.
- d) There is limited funding to implement activities in the workplan, which forms the basis for performance monitoring and assessment.
- e) Some studies have shown that in Uganda's public service, there are generally weak incentives for conducting the full performance management cycle, especially appraisal, in a timely manner, since "*the results of the performance appraisal are not immediately analyzed and used to inform individual, department and organization-wide development and capacity building planning and budgeting processes*" (Tidemand and Ssewankambo 2008, cited in Karyeija 2008).

- f) Research findings confirm that DCDOs implement some aspects of the performance management system at the local government level. Out of the 12 DCDOs assessed, one indicated setting performance targets with direct reports, ten conducted performance-related discussions, and three conducted appraisals. This is contrary to responses from Senior PSWOs and CDOs, who claimed that no such activities are conducted by their supervisor. This discrepancy reflects a breakdown in the execution of supervisory roles.
- g) Job descriptions at the local government level, which form the basis for performance management, are inadequate. In addition, performance management as a principal responsibility for any position with supervisory duties is not captured in the job descriptions. A recent review by the MoPS (2017) notes that *“a big number of the staff rarely fill the performance appraisal forms; and most of the employees especially at lower levels did not have neither clear Job Descriptions, nor schedules of duties.”*
- h) The analysis of findings from fieldwork suggest that performance management is conducted to some extent. Almost 90% of respondents acknowledged having performance contracts, which form the basis for activity implementation. About 72% indicated that they had child protection and OVC indicators in their contracts, while 80.4% indicated they had been spoken to about their progress at work. However, these results were in contrast to views shared during the open sessions that most of the participants did not have contracts and never had opportunities to discuss work progress with their supervisors.

On the basis of the above information, it is concluded that the system has all the basic components that reflect best practices and shows suitability for use by any institution, especially as it focuses on accountability for results. It is also clear that the Government has made attempts to address obvious gaps. In this discussion and analysis, it is therefore important to distinguish between design factors and actual implementation. While there is evidence demonstrating effectiveness in design, those in leadership or supervisory positions need to intensify their commitment to performance management to realise agreed-upon targets and fulfil mentoring and counselling roles. It is important to shift the focus from appraisal to the whole performance management cycle, as in a) and b) below, to strengthen the performance management culture.

- a) The discussion on performance management seemed to focus on appraisal or final assessment, which is at the tail end of the process, and how it leads to financial reward or implementation of the Rewards and Sanctions Framework. This focus is understandable because employees expect rewards, especially increments in salary, at the end of each performance period. Staff have the mindset that they will receive a financial reward regardless of their performance results.
- b) Leaders and managers do not regard performance management as a ‘key result area’ or a routine leadership practice, despite being one area in which they too are assessed by their superiors. It is gratifying, however, to note that a few DCDOs acknowledged performance management as a principal responsibility by indicating that they:
  - i. Set performance targets with staff at the beginning of the year
  - ii. Hold regular routine monitoring and support supervision visits
  - iii. Conduct performance appraisals with staff.
- c) The performance management guidelines provide adequate guidance on the roles of managers in the process and emphasise all stages in the performance management cycle, especially the monitoring stage, the longest period in the cycle. The guidelines state: *“The Appraiser has the responsibility of monitoring performance on a continuous basis throughout the year to ensure that activities in line with the agreed performance*

*plan are on track and to provide advice and take remedial action in case of need.”* Based on discussions during district workshops, over 50% of respondents indicated that performance management at the local government level is nonexistent, and there is little evidence to suggest that direct reports demand to be assessed.

- d) Although statements k) and m) above seem to contradict each other, the overwhelming response that performance management in its full practice is rarely executed is in line with statement b) that indicates that only a few DCDOs implement activities i), ii), and iii). This result is an indication that this leadership role is being inadequately fulfilled and that subsequently, the Rewards and Sanctions Framework is not being sufficiently implemented.

The Government has been deliberate in its decision not to link performance appraisal to salary increment due to financial implications. The performance management system is designed to recognise excellence by offering nonfinancial rewards, as provided for in Circular Standing Instruction No. 1 of 2011. This fact was acknowledged by district staff who expect only a “*simple thank you, a commendation letter, etc.*” or any action that communicates appreciation for good performance. The failure to implement the Rewards and Sanctions Framework is purely a leadership issue. The popular belief that it is the responsibility of human resource practitioners to conduct appraisals is misleading, as only a direct supervisor can plan, monitor, and assess performance, as well as recommend courses of action or human resource decisions to take in response to appraisal results. The human resource practitioner only provides tools and guidelines and ensures that correct procedures are followed. Unless leadership at all levels views performance management as a core or principal responsibility in their jobs, attainment of performance management system goals will remain a challenge for the Government.

## **5.2 Total organisational leadership**

Based on the discussions above and evidence gathered during the consultative process, the MGLSD has demonstrated strength in technical leadership. This leadership is manifested through the excellent understanding of the technical aspects of social services. However, there is little evidence of general leadership competencies, especially those regarding the proactive use of performance management systems. This bias towards technical leadership is due to the tangible outcomes associated with it; people-oriented leadership produces intangibles, yet these intangibles are responsible for the quality of the tangible outputs. Moreover, challenges related to dual reporting should have been dealt with as soon as they surfaced by explaining that the community-based services department has a line management reporting relationship to the local government and a functional or advisory reporting relationship to the central government MGLSD.

Performance management as a routine management function does not have to be attached to the end-of-year appraisal, but should be a process that yields daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly results. Questions around who appraises whom should not even arise, as the structure is very clear: the direct supervisor is responsible for managing people who report directly to him/her. For example, it is the duty of the Senior PSWO to appraise the PSWO. In the absence of a strong performance management culture, technical inputs are usually rendered ineffective, and this is one reason why outputs and outcomes from well-meaning interventions fail the ‘sustainability test.’

Statements such as “*...so-and-so come and give us answers, these are your things*” whenever child protection issues are raised, or common incidences of a senior officer attending a meeting for a technical officer demonstrate poor leadership behaviours.

The discussions above point to the need for proactive and transformational organisational leadership, as well as to strategic and operational management responsibilities at different

levels. While the MGLSD has demonstrated strong technical leadership, less attention has been paid to leadership that is willing to face challenges and is constantly seeking new ways to translate technical capacity into child protection outcomes. As much as financial resources constitute a major performance-inhibiting factor, there is little attention being paid to developing and inculcating leadership behaviours that demonstrate the 'art of practising leadership as a value'; persistently setting and remaining focused on realistic daily, weekly, and monthly goals; taking initiative; rejecting pessimism and embracing optimism; and championing change.



## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

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### 6.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this review, the following conclusions are made:

1. There is role clarity and a shared understanding within and between ministries within the decentralised system. However, there are significant gaps in the actual execution of the roles. For example, it has been established that technical backstopping or support supervision is only provided to districts implementing projects and that the dissemination of legal and policy documents, monitoring and evaluation functions, and coordination efforts remain weak.
2. The community-based services department structure under the local government is clear yet inadequate to support child care and protection services. The job descriptions do not cover all relevant functions for each cadre, and in the case of the PSWO, the entire job description is missing. In addition, job descriptions provide the basic requirements for the different positions but miss out on key responsibilities, especially for the DCDO and senior-level positions, which do not adequately reflect leadership and managerial functions.
3. The social service workforce has the requisite basic academic qualifications in relevant fields of study. The person specifications do not reflect the comprehensive set of competencies that are relevant for the respective positions and functions.
4. In terms of numbers, the level of staff in the community-based services department is not adequate to provide effective social services, including child protection services. This shortage is exacerbated by the fact that several job positions are not filled. Although there is no information on the workforce-to-population ratio, it is evident that members of the current workforce have very heavy caseloads.
5. Although a capacity-building strategy does exist for local governments, it has not been fully implemented, and as a result, most social service workforce cadres have not benefited from capacity development initiatives. In addition, capacity development has been narrowed to formal training sessions, while other approaches, such as coaching, mentorship, and the provision of performance management tools, have not been explored. As part of the overall capacity-building strategy of the community-based services department, the local governments have failed to provide adequate facilities to enable the social service workforce to perform its tasks.
6. The social development sector has continued to suffer from inadequate funding. This shortage has affected the overall capacity of the sector to perform, as staffing and facilitation are both linked to funding. a breakdown of funding allocated for each type of service delivered in the community-based services department, for example, how much is allocated for child protection services, for gender services, for labour services, for rehabilitation services, etc. could strengthen the sector further.

Most of the issues seem to concern how people in leadership and management positions perform their roles. These positions include leadership at the centre (including in the line ministries); leaders at the local government level, including the CAO and DCDO; and senior officers at the community-based services department level. All of these centres of leadership must try to maximise the current level of resources to achieve better results.

### 6.2 General recommendations

The following recommendations assume that both the MGLSD and the MoLG are open enough to reflect on their leadership roles and more importantly, on how they are collaborating

to provide support to the community-based services department. It is correct to say that both ministries understand these roles and are making their best efforts to fulfil them. Therefore, it is expected that both ministries will invest in strengthening organisational leadership and supervisory responsibilities across the hierarchy to inculcate a culture of practicing leadership as a value.

As an overall strategy for acting on the recommendations, especially those regarding adherence to systems and organisational dictates, the Management Sciences for Health<sup>10</sup>-tested leadership development approach was adopted. This approach is anchored in facilitation, coaching, and mentoring and emphasises action. The Director of Social Protection recently underwent leadership training, and as part of the position's people management role, he should take a lead role in replicating this training in the MGLSD.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://erc.msh.org>

### 6.2.1 Overall strengthening of the social service workforce

The recommendations presented in Table 12 include a combination of short- to long-term actions.

**Table 12: Recommendations for strengthening the social service workforce**

Thematic Area	Functional Review Finding	Short-Term Actions	Long-term Actions
<b>Overall supervision and leadership</b>	a) There are relatively poor line supervision and leadership practices across the hierarchy. The supervisory and leadership responsibilities are not being effectively executed. The demand for accountability and results through performance management, mentoring, and coaching is weak.	Improve overall line supervision to ensure that supervisees understand their roles and more importantly, execute these roles in an accountable manner. It is recommended that a leadership development approach is adopted. This approach is anchored in facilitation, coaching, and mentoring. The Director of Social Protection has already undergone similar training and should be in a position to replicate this training at the MGLSD level. In addition, this approach has been tested by Management for Health Sciences <sup>11</sup> , which recorded positive results in terms of improving supervision and leadership.	
<b>Planning the social service workforce</b>	a) There is no long-term projection of staffing requirements in terms of numbers and qualifications based on trends analysis and expected increases in service levels. b) The qualifications requirements for different work levels and titles are not adequately defined in the current job descriptions for the DCDO, Senior PSWO, or the PSWO. c) The MGLSD has not yet developed a monitoring and evaluation system to, among other needs, serve decision-making, programming, quality monitoring, policy changes, and impact assessment.	a) Develop a social service workforce strengthening plan that incorporates: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projected numbers per cadre</li> <li>Required professional training</li> <li>Deployment plans for the different sectors</li> <li>A gradual implementation plan</li> </ol> b) Standardise the required qualifications for different job positions and incorporate these into the job descriptions. c) Develop a robust monitoring and evaluation system to meet social protection data needs and to generate management information for policy, strategic, and operational decision-making. This system should also provide for strong reporting and	a) Justice, law and order sector institutions should be supported to employ qualified social workers to undertake probation services for children in conflict with the law and other services for children in contact with the law. This support would contribute significantly to social service workforce development and would meet the rising demand for professional child protection services.

<sup>11</sup> <http://erc.msh.org>

Thematic Area	Functional Review Finding	Short-Term Actions	Long-term Actions
		feedback processes between the different organisational levels, including the political level.	
<b>Developing the social service workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Government has not developed a competency framework to directly link performance standards to skills or the competencies required to attain standards, as well as to guide work-based staff development and continuous professional development efforts.</li> <li>b) While the MoLG has articulated its Capacity Development Strategy, the strategy does not include child protection issues. In addition, without clearly articulated staff training and development needs, it is difficult to implement a results-oriented training and continuous professional development programme.</li> <li>c) As part of staff development, inductions provide a strong basis for public service staff to understand their jobs. Currently, no inductions or orientations are conducted for newly recruited staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Develop and implement a competency framework for different cadres of the social service workforce.</li> <li>b) Develop and implement a strategy and guidelines for continuous professional development that are flexible, that recognise efforts and motivate individuals, and that clearly state the role of supervisors as coaches and mentors. This strategy should include induction, pre-service, and in-service trainings.</li> <li>c) Develop and enforce a code of ethical principles and conduct for the social service workforce—this can be done in partnership with professional associations such as the National Association of Social Workers of Uganda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Progressively strengthen the collaborative links between the social development sector and institutions of learning, so that they produce human resources for social services, and for child protection in particular, that are in line with current trends, demands, and professional standards. This collaboration could be achieved through joint curriculum reviews, strengthened partnerships in field practice education, and the participation of practitioners in teaching.</li> <li>b) Develop and implement a comprehensive capacity development plan based on staff requirement projections and trends analyses of the child protection environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting the social service workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Social welfare services are inadequately prioritised in budget allocation and release at the district level.</li> <li>b) There is low prioritisation of child welfare activities by the district leadership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Lobby for increases in resource allocation to the social development sector, community-based services department, and child care services in particular.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Professionalise the social service workforce through an act of Parliament to establish a professional council that regulates the workforce's practices.</li> <li>b) Develop and implement a resource mobilisation strategy to tap into nonstate financing and attract non-financial resources.</li> </ul>

Thematic Area	Functional Review Finding	Short-Term Actions	Long-term Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c) There are inadequate logistics, infrastructure, transport, and other administrative services to enable the social service workforce to perform its functions effectively.</li> <li>d) The allocation and actual release of local revenue and unconditional grant/non-wage resources are tagged to highly prioritised activities that contribute to the lower local government's score during the annual assessment of minimum conditions.</li> <li>e) Currently, there is weak collaboration at the directorate level between the MGLSD and the MoLG.</li> <li>f) There are too many project-based coordination structures at the local government level, which increases the burden on participating stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) The MGLSD should establish a conditional grant for child care and protection.</li> <li>c) Local governments should allocate at least 10% of discretionary funds to the community-based services department for the care and protection of children.</li> <li>d) Local governments and other stakeholders, like the MIA, should provide adequate infrastructures including special rooms for juveniles in conflict with the law and rooms where counselling services can be provided to children.</li> <li>e) The Government of Uganda should increase funding for the social development sector from the current 0.5% to 1.6% of the national budget by end of 2019.</li> <li>f) Lobby for child protection to become an assessment area for performance in local governments.</li> <li>g) Improve collaboration and communication between the Directorate of Social Protection and the Directorate of Local Government Inspection.</li> <li>h) Expedite the harmonisation of coordination mechanisms at the local government level.</li> <li>i) Formalise the position of parasocial workers to fill the human resource gaps at the community level and to regulate their performance.</li> </ul>	

### 6.3 Restructuring the community-based services department

While the community-based services department organogram appears adequate in terms of design, several factors—the use of job titles that do not reflect the actual job content, absent or inadequately defined job descriptions and person specifications, misunderstandings regarding reporting relationships, and inadequate staffing—have contributed to the reduced performance capacity of the social service workforce. For example, the estimated 40% of Senior PSWOs and 50% of PSWOs complying with statutory roles is partly the result of PWSOs not having a job description, as well as being overwhelmed with other responsibilities, especially those delegated outside child protection. Based on the evidence generated during this study and others, it is strongly recommended that the community-based services department be restructured. Options for restructuring the community-based services department are presented in Table 13.

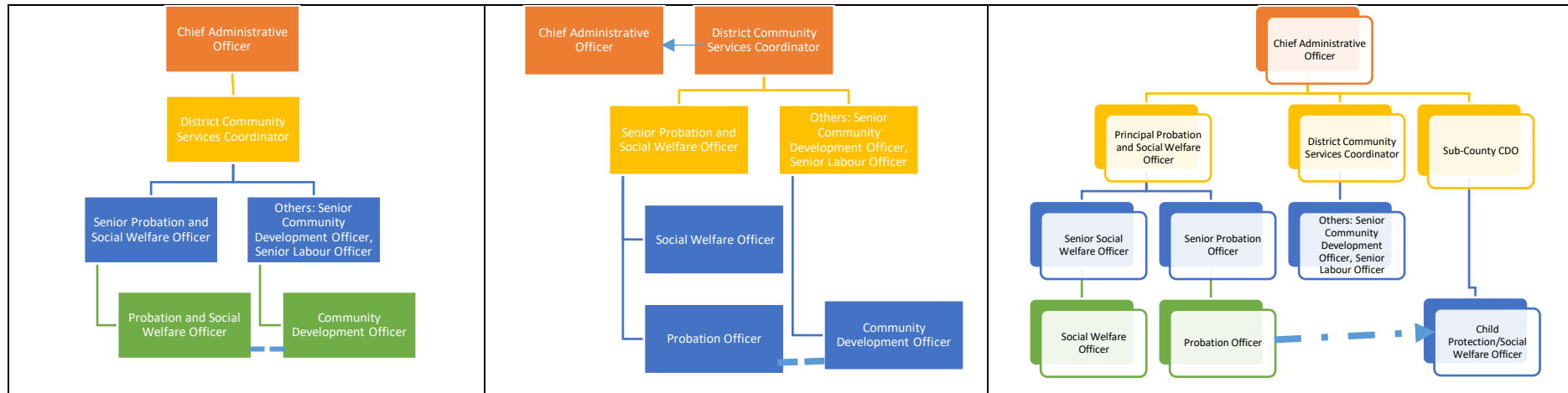
**Table 13: Options for restructuring the community-based services department**

Immediate Actions	Medium-Term Actions (2 to 3 years)	Long-Term Actions (4 years)
<p>Maintain the current structure, but make the following adjustments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Upgrade child protection to an area of assessment at the local government level.</li> <li>2. Change the job title of DCDO to District Community Services Coordinator (DCSC).</li> <li>3. Improve the leadership function of the DCSC and Senior PSWO through a results-oriented leadership development programme that combines coaching and mentorship strategies to promote effective learning.</li> <li>4. Develop a competency framework focusing on knowledge, skills, and appropriate work-related behaviours.</li> </ol>	<p>Maintain points 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the immediate actions, but make further adjustments, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create two officer-level positions, with the Senior PSWO remaining the most senior technical position and split the social welfare and probation functions between the officer positions.</li> <li>2. Have the two positions maintain their technical support functions to the CDO at the sub-county level.</li> <li>3. Reconsider parasocial workers, as described earlier.</li> </ol> <p><b>Pros:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Retains enhanced visibility with the presence of the Senior PSWO</li> </ol>	<p>Building on the medium-term actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reestablish the Department of Probation and Social Welfare. Accountable to, create a position of Principal Probation and Social Welfare as the senior most technical position.</li> <li>2. Create one more senior position and create two senior positions, one in charge of probation services and the other in charge of social welfare.</li> <li>3. Maintain the two officers, as in Option 2 (below).</li> <li>4. Consider creating a Child Protection Officer to take all child protection and social welfare issues from the CDO.</li> <li>5. Increase the wage bill.</li> </ol> <p><b>Pros:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) All pros in medium-term actions apply</li> </ol>



<p>Use this framework along with the leadership development plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Revise the job descriptions for the DCSC, Senior PSWO, PSWO, and CDO to address identified gaps.</li> <li>6. Clarify the differences in the job functions between the Senior PSWO and the PSWO. The Senior PSWO should: assume the senior technical function; be held accountable for technical reporting, non-statutory functions, and supervisory functions; liaise with justice, law and order sector institutions; be a vital technical link to the MGLSD; and perform social welfare- and youth-related functions. In contrast, the PSWO should maintain all court-related service functions and be responsible for support or backstopping the CDO at the sub-county level.</li> <li>7. Formally recognise existing community-based parasocial workers as part of government structures by considering and treating them as government volunteers.</li> </ol> <p><b>Pros:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Addresses immediate concerns</li> <li>b) Requires no additional staff</li> <li>c) Enhances child protection visibility</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Makes probation visible, while maintaining its close ties with social welfare</li> <li>c) Increases the quantity and quality of child care services</li> <li>d) Demonstrates concern for protecting the rights of children (“walking the talk”)</li> </ol> <p><b>Cons:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Requires additional staffing, which may be difficult</li> <li>b) Requires securing increases in the wage bill, which will be difficult</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) The department-level status raises the visibility of probation and social welfare issues (working out its own budget)</li> <li>c) Sends a strong message of the value attached to child protection</li> </ol> <p><b>Cons:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Requires increasing staffing, extended to the sub-county level, which will be difficult</li> <li>b) Requires obtaining increases in the wage bill, which will be challenging</li> </ol>
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<p>d) Sends a message of the serious consideration of child protection, and of probation and social welfare in particular</p> <p>e) Deals with current confusions in technical reporting with the Senior PSWO in charge</p> <p><b>Cons:</b></p> <p>a) Subject to the same funding arrangements</p> <p>b) Depends on change in management behaviours</p> <p>c) The community-based services department will continue to be treated as an ‘orphan’ department.</p> <p>d) Burden on the CDO still remains heavy</p>		
<b>Organisational Structure: Option 1</b>	<b>Organisational Structure: Option 2</b>	<b>Organisational Structure: Option 3</b>



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# Appendices

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## Appendix A. Suggestions for Job Descriptions

### *a) District Community Development Officer (DCDO)*

#### **Suggested title: District Community-Based Services Coordinator**

In addition to the current elements in the job description of the DCDO, leadership and management functions should be reflected. As a guiding principle, this position is expected to perform more management-related tasks than technical tasks. In practice, the job should achieve a 70%:30% work distribution between leadership/management and technical functions.

The primary purpose of this job is to manage and coordinate the implementation of community-based services, as provided for in relevant laws and other statutes. In formulating the job description, the following should be considered:

1. Articulating a unifying vision that captures and represents the aspirations for a better life for children and other vulnerable groups (this vision should be in synch with the national-level vision and development agenda) by:
  - Maintaining a balance and link between the bigger picture and the day-to-day needs of the department
  - Integrating the department's operational policies, processes, and structures with those of other justice, law and order sector institutions
  - Identifying opportunities for change and taking first steps towards implementation.
2. Creating an environment that motivates staff and encourages their commitment to work, portraying a positive work culture, and promoting teamwork by:
  - Working with the CAO to advocate and lobby for the timely release of funds
  - Linking the section to external resources (e.g., human, financial, and material)
  - Providing logistics to support service delivery
  - Lobbying senior management for workspace
  - Initiating and promoting the development of an appropriate work culture.
3. Managing performance by:
  - Using results-based planning tools at the section and individual work planning levels
  - Allocating resources according to sectional priorities per quarter
  - Monitoring and reporting on sectional performance and taking any corrective steps
  - Monitoring and assessing individual staff performance and reporting accordingly
  - Identifying, developing, and nurturing talent
  - Arranging with the centre to provide support supervisions
  - Coordinating the effective delivery of community-based services in the district.
4. Managing the district management information system, including registering community groups and providers of social and other services.

## Person Specifications

**Qualifications:** An individual who aspires to this position must come from the rank and file and must have the basic qualification of a bachelor's or master's degree in social work or social development. A higher degree with a focus on social services planning and management is crucial to be effective in this job. An individual with a master's degree in any relevant field should have management training at least at the diploma level. In terms of experience, a minimum of three years in a senior officer-level position in a social development field is sufficient experience to ensure that the individual has gained practical experience in supervision and coordination of a set of related functions.

**Competencies:** As this is a management position, leadership and management competencies take precedence over technical/subject matter competencies. In addition to what is already in the current job descriptions, the following knowledge, skills, and attitudes should be considered.

**Knowledge of:** Strategic management (full cycle); relevant national policies and legal frameworks; policy analysis and formulation processes; stakeholder management and engagement; current trends in monitoring and evaluation approaches; a results-based management model and approach; change management and processes; and technical requirements in the field that he/she is in charge of.

**Skills:** People management; integration and mainstreaming; negotiating and influencing; analytical and systematic thinking; oral and written communication, including report writing; scenario-building and trends analysis; problem-solving and decision-making; team-building; taking charge for one's professional growth.

**Attitudes:** Practicing leadership as a value (exercising self-leadership); taking responsibility for one's own actions; listening actively to others; providing and receiving feedback; adapting to change; acting ethically and professionally; engaging in self-development.

### ***b) Senior Probation and Social Welfare Officer***

The Senior Probation and Social Welfare Officer position combines supervisory and technical responsibility in equal proportions. This is an entry-level position into management. The purposes of this job are to provide technical leadership and to harmonise and coordinate field implementation of social welfare and probation activities at the local level. It is the true representation of the MGLSD at this level. In revising this job description, the following should be considered.

1. Supervising the work of the section/unit (the first level of entry into management) by:
  - Developing probation and social welfare section/unit operational plans and budgets and advocating for the full and timely release of allocations
  - Guiding staff in developing individual workplans and monitoring and assessing their performance
  - Coordinating the work of Probation and Social Welfare Officers and linking them to justice, law and order sector institutions
  - Monitoring the implementation of probation and social welfare unit plans and reporting accordingly
  - Maintaining information related to probation and social welfare services
  - Exercising accountability for the delivery of probation and social welfare services by tracking results
  - Engaging local businesses and corporate houses in supporting child care and protection initiatives
  - Attending district-level stakeholder coordination meetings and supporting the implementation of resolutions.

2. Providing technical backstopping to team members (Social Welfare Officers and Probation Officers) and IPs, when necessary, by:
  - Guiding Probation and Social Welfare Officers on legal and policy interpretations
  - Providing procedural and other guidelines for probation and social welfare services
  - Monitoring the use of guidelines on social welfare and child protection to ensure they conform to international best practices
  - Training, mentoring, and coaching Probation and Social Welfare Officers
  - Facilitating entry points for technical or support supervisions from the MGLSD
  - Developing appropriate operational strategies for dealing with recurring probation and social welfare concerns.
3. Monitoring community-based and other actors dealing with social welfare and child protection by:
  - Undertaking support supervision and monitoring of other state and nonstate actors
  - Facilitating information-sharing with other justice, law and order sector institutions to support evidence-based decision-making
  - Maintaining a database of all development programmes in the district that have a child protection component.
4. Working with justice, law and order sector institutions, such as prisons, to provide probation services for adult offenders and to support their family integration by:
  - Identifying complementary linkages across services to meet the needs of children and other vulnerable groups
  - Providing technical backstopping and information on probation and social welfare services to justice, law and order sector institutions when required.
5. Identifying projects for child protection and resource mobilisation initiatives by:
  - Participating in research on child protection and social welfare
  - Initiating proposals to raise funds for probation and social welfare activities.
6. Creating community and stakeholder awareness of the rights and responsibilities of children.
7. Advocating for child rights and observing national and international days.

## **Person Specifications**

**Qualifications:** To be qualified for this position, the candidate must have a bachelor's degree in social work or an equivalent qualification that focuses on children and family welfare. The person should have gained at least three years of experience in the Probation and Social Welfare Officer position.

**Competencies:** The following knowledge, skills, and attitudes should be considered.

**Knowledge of:** The full range of social welfare and child protection services; child protection programming; human rights approaches; national and international legal frameworks on child protection; child-friendly environments; child counselling and psychosocial counselling; stakeholder management and engagement; development partners' programmes and priorities; the justice system and court procedures; research methodology; project management (approaches); results-based management; monitoring and evaluation; public service rules and regulations; and community-based approaches to child protection.

**Skills:** Operational planning and priority-setting; work organisation; team-building; stakeholder analysis; facilitation; conflict resolution; counselling, including the ability to identify abusive situations or environments; information management; delegation; mentoring and coaching; analytical report writing; scenario-building and analysis; and interpersonal skills, including the ability to deal with different personalities and the ability to work with children.

**Attitudes:** Being empathetic while remaining professional; taking responsibility for one's own actions; listening actively to others, especially children; being open to giving and receiving feedback; being non-judgmental; showing respect for everyone; and valuing and understanding others, especially offenders.

### ***c) Probation and Social Welfare Officer***

The job description for the Probation and Social Welfare Officer can be derived from what is included in the Handbook and the PSWO job description provided by the justice, law and order sector. A combination of the two sources suggests that the purpose of this job is to ensure that the rights of all children, especially those who come in contact and/or conflict with the law, are protected and that children have access to justice in accordance with the law. The PSWO would be engaged in the following nonstatutory tasks:

1. Identifying vulnerable children or those at risk of abuse or in need of probation and social welfare services
2. Identifying any bottlenecks and problems affecting the delivery of probation and social welfare services to children
3. Prioritising tasks and activities within the budgetary allocation to ensure that resources are targeted accordingly
4. Identifying and providing inputs into the work of other actors, with a sense of urgency and integrity
5. Providing technical information and backstopping to the Community Development Officer and others involved with child protection and social welfare at the community level.

The statutory activities for consideration in this job are presented in the table below.

Key Job Elements of Probation and Social Welfare Officer Job Description		
<b>Juvenile probation services:</b> Advocating for child rights; responding to crises (emergencies); providing assessments, including social investigations; evaluating evidence and guiding child and judicial officers in making appropriate decisions; representing the child in courts of law; providing evidence in and promoting child-friendly court proceedings; monitoring child adherence to court orders; making referrals; and supporting family unification.	<b>Social welfare services:</b> Identifying and supporting vulnerable children and families; managing cases; advocating for child rights; facilitating access to social services; providing psychosocial counselling; implementing and monitoring social assistance schemes; promoting child participation; coordinating community responses to child protection; and raising awareness of child protection issues.	<b>Community development services:</b> Preventing child maltreatment; strengthening households and communities to meet the needs of children; linking marginalised communities to economic opportunities; and promoting social change to reduce risks to children.

## Person Specifications

**Qualifications:** A bachelor's degree in social work or an equivalent qualification in child protection is required.

**Competencies:** The following knowledge, skills, and attitudes should be considered.

**Knowledge of:** National and international legal frameworks; child protection systems; what constitutes a child-friendly environment; case management approaches; the justice system and its procedures; the child protection landscape; current trends in child protection; theories, concepts, and principles that define child protection; the needs of children under different circumstances (i.e., risky situations) and appropriate responses; basic law practice; referral guidelines and procedures; basic project management; needs assessment procedures and local-level politics and their impact on child care service delivery;.

**Skills:** The ability to recognise changes in child circumstances and take appropriate action; the ability to tap into community resources for child protection; the ability to identify deviation from established procedures and take appropriate action; the ability to seek guidance from the next work level; the ability to identify children at risk (in contact and/or conflict with law); the management of children as clients; oral and written communication; win-win conflict resolution approaches; boss- management (get the most out of the relationship); and the ability to interact with children under different circumstances.

**Attitudes:** Practicing leadership as a value (exercising self-leadership); being open-minded; being empathetic; being approachable; being friendly to children; being trustworthy; being cooperative; being willing to learn.

### **d) Community Development Officer**

All community-based services converge on the CDO at the sub-county level. Based on current practices, this job is involved in social welfare, juvenile probation, and community development, which may include youth group organisation and child development programmes at the sub-county level. The position intersects with child abuse, neglect, and other forms of violation and also with the local justice system. Given some of the changes in the legal and policy framework, such as the delivery of juvenile justice through diversion, by default, the CDO may become heavily involved in juvenile probation services. It is important and necessary therefore to balance the load of responsibilities without compromising quality for each service area. It is suggested that the following be considered in the CDO job description:

<b>Planning and budgeting; community mobilisation and organisation; community sensitisation; promoting equal participation; creating of functional groups (youths, people with disabilities, women); promoting functional adult literacy; monitoring facilities for compliance; OVC and child protection functions.</b>		
<b>Juvenile probation services:</b>	<b>Social welfare services:</b>	<b>Community development services:</b>
Advocating for child rights; responding to crises (emergencies); promoting child-friendly court proceedings; monitoring child adherence to court orders; making referrals; promoting family reunification.	Identifying and supporting vulnerable children and families; facilitating access to social services; providing psychosocial counselling; coordinating community responses to child protection; raising awareness of child protection issues; and managing cases.	Strengthening households and communities to meet the needs of children; linking marginalised communities to economic opportunities; and promoting social change to reduce risks to children.

It is further suggested that the MoPS undertakes a workload assessment based on the inclusion or expansion of tasks for the position of CDO.

### **Person specifications**

**Qualifications:** A bachelor's degree in social work, social development, or related field and additional training in child protection are required.

**Competencies:** The following knowledge, skills, and attitudes should be considered.

**Knowledge of:** Child protection systems; national and international legal frameworks; all ongoing community initiatives being implemented in the community; basic knowledge of social and economic development; community development approaches; community mobilisation strategies; children needs assessment approaches or procedures; the existing range of child protection services and providers; and referral and reporting procedures. (As an entry point into the social welfare sector, it is expected that the incumbent will have acquired this basic knowledge through formal training [see Qualifications].)

**Skills:** The ability to communicate with different people effectively and listen to their points of view; the ability interact with individuals, groups, and households in difficult circumstances; conflict resolution; community mobilisation; the ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong and immediately take appropriate action; mediation; negotiation; influencing and persuading; oral and written communication; and interpreting various international protocols (with regard to, e.g., children, women).

**Attitudes:** Being open-minded; being empathetic; being willing to learn; being trustworthy, and being cooperative.



## Appendix B. Participating Districts in Regional Consultations

- |                 |             |             |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Amudat       | 11. Luuka   | 20. Pader   |
| 2. Bukomansimbi | 12. Masindi | 21. Rukiga  |
| 3. Kaabong      | 13. Mayuge  | 22. Sironko |
| 4. Kabarole     | 14. Mbale   | 23. Soroti  |
| 5. Kapchorwa    | 15. Mbarara | 24. Wakiso  |
| 6. KCCA         | 16. Mpigi   | 25. Yumbe   |
| 7. Kisoro       | 17. Mukono  |             |
| 8. Kumi         | 18. Nebbi   |             |
| 9. Lamwo        | 19. Ntoroko |             |
| 10. Lira        |             |             |

## Appendix C: National-Level Key Informants

Ministry, Department, or Agency	Official
MGLSD	Director, Directorate of Social Protection
	Assistant Commissioner, Children and Youth Affairs
	Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources
	Senior Probation Officer
	Coordinator, National Child Protection Working Group
MoLG	Commissioner, Local Councils Development
MoPS	Principal Human Resource Officer
MIA	Commissioner, Community Services
Uganda Prison Services	Rehabilitation & Reintegration Officer
UPF	Acting Commissioner, Child and Family Protection Unit
UPF	Criminal Investigations Department
Justice, Law and Order Sector Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical Advisor</li> <li>• National Coordinator, Justice for Children Programme</li> </ul>
Development partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF</li> <li>• UNFPA</li> <li>• UN Women</li> </ul>
Sample of regional/district key informants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAO</li> <li>• Magistrates</li> <li>• Remand Home Officer</li> <li>• Human Resources Management</li> <li>• OVC Coordinator (KCCA)</li> <li>• CFPU</li> <li>• Regional Coordinators, Community Services</li> <li>• Implementing Partners</li> </ul>