Save the Children

REPORT

COMMUNITY-LEVEL SOCIAL WELFARE WORKFORCE

Analysis of the state of play in nine countries

MARCH 2025

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We dedicate this report to all the community-level social welfare workers around the world who conduct vital (often unpaid) work in challenging circumstances in the hope that this study will contribute to making the meaningful work they are carrying out more visible, more supported, and more culturally and contextually grounded.

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ACRONYMS

CBCPM	Community-based child protection mechanism
CLSWW	Community-level social welfare workforce
CCPE	Cellule Communautaire de Protection de l'Enfance (Community Child Protection Committee in Burkina Faso)
CVD	Village Development Councils [in Burkina Faso]
CP	Child Protection
CSW	Community social worker
CYP	Children and young people
DCPU	District Child Protection Unit [in India]
GBV	Gender-based violence
KII	Key informant interview
ICBF	Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (Colombian Institute for Family Well-being)
ICPS	Integrated child protection scheme [in India]
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SC	Save the Children
SWO	Social welfare officer
UASC	Unaccompanied and separated children
VAC	Violence against children

SUMMARY

Introduction

The study aims to describe the roles, responsibilities, and challenges encountered by the community-level social welfare workforce (CLSWW) who work for child protection (CP) in nine countries where Save the Children (SC) operates: Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Mali, Myanmar, Tanzania, and Uganda. The study focuses on (i) identifying the variety of ways in which individuals are given the responsibility to serve as the initial contact points on CP issues within communities, (ii) determining the level of formalisation, support, and reward for these roles (as seen, for example, through policy, job descriptions, selection criteria, training programmes, and supervision mechanisms in the available documents), and (iii) examining how the structural context of, and the linkages within the CP system, can affect the strengthening of the CLSWW. Findings from this study will inform the development of reflective guidance on the strengthening of the CLSWW.

Methodology

This study involved a review of documents provided by SC offices as well as literature accessed online using search terms related to CP, social work, social welfare, child well-being, and community work, both in the sampled countries and the wider regional and global literature. A total of 160 papers, including academic articles, training materials, job descriptions, national action strategies, and local policies were referred to. The literature review was supplemented by key informant interviews (KIIs). An interview guide was collaboratively developed in English, translated into French and Spanish, and used in interviews with 15 key informants, primarily SC staff but also some key partners, government officials, and global experts on the subject (see the full list of key informants in Annex 2). The study team periodically aligned efforts with SC, ensuring a convergent interpretation of evidence. The KIIs played a crucial role in validating and expanding contextual knowledge by offering non-public documentary evidence and insights into the practical challenges faced by the CLSWW in the sample countries.

Defining the Community-level Social Welfare Workforce

A specific definition of the CLSWW focused on titles or roles can be misleading and limiting due to the variety of terminology used, the interchangeable use of terms, and the difficulties in establishing the distinctiveness of various types of workers (i.e., "volunteer", "incentivised worker", "paraprofessional worker", and—our choice—paraprofessional social workers). The review of the literature highlighted a need for a revised universal definition of the CLSWW. Challenges continue to persist within the literature due to many contrasting definitions of the CLSWW, with some commentators arguing that the lack of clear definitions is one of the most serious issues to be resolved before the survival of social work can be guaranteed (Lymbery, 2001). For this study and the reflective guidance, the following definition of the CLSWW (provided by SC) is therefore proposed:[1]

[1] GSSWA, 2017

"The Community-Level Social Welfare Workforce (CLSWW), despite its diversity of roles, functions, institutional settings, and job titles, shares a common fundamental purpose—to work with communities, including children themselves, to support them in keeping their children safe. As volunteers, paraprofessionals, and professionals, they deliver this support according to their different levels of training, experience, community needs and expectations, and defined responsibilities (as a full-time worker or as part of the broader roles of the workforce). The preventative, responsive, and promotive support and services to families and children in their communities are informed by the context, and could include understanding their individual and collective needs, facilitating access to appropriate support and services, reducing discrimination, promoting social justice, and preventing and responding to violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect, and family separation."[2]

This definition may not incorporate all the desirable attributes (e.g., well-supervised and connected to the formal system), but it allows for the inclusion of all the different variants that currently exist.

The study found variations in the roles of the CLSWW and their degree of formalisation across the nine countries spread across Asia, Africa, and South America. In most countries in the sample, however, these workers, where appointed, are often unpaid volunteers compensating for the absence of formal services. There are also differences in how CP work at the community level is organised, whether assigned to individuals or groupings such as committees. The diversity in the roles and origins of the CLSWW underscores the importance of local processes and perspectives. Some countries have tried to utilise traditional mechanisms (e.g., community mothers in Colombia) in formal social work.

It needs to be noted that the focus of this study is on the CLSWW who are not professional social workers or caseworkers. It is recognised that professional social workers and caseworkers/managers also work at the community level where necessary and are an essential part of a holistic approach to child protection systems strengthening work. However, the study considers the "non-formal" social welfare system and does not therefore explore the role of professional social workers except through their interactions with the non-formal workforce.

National legal frameworks

All countries in the study have ratified major international conventions on children's rights and enacted legislation or policies related to CP. However, in the countries studied, the legal frameworks regulating the roles of the CLSWW are weak or non-existent. This lack of a solid and clear national legal and policy framework could originate from, for example, a lack of interest in laws, policies, and resources related to the social welfare workforce at the community level; the lack of organisation of the CLSWW; and the overall low priority given to child protection. Any governance provision for the CLSWW is mostly related to national and international legislation and, in some cases, is grounded in (often still in draft form) internal policies and white papers. Even in countries where legal frameworks do exist, there are challenges in translating these into practice, with key informants expressing concerns about the actual support and budgetary implications for government commitments. A more defined understanding of the roles and engagement of the CLSWW is still needed to strengthen collaboration between governments, national and international, local, and civil society actors.

[2] This definition partly draws upon the GSSWA definition of social service worker. See GSSWA, 2018. Core Concepts and Principles of Effective Case Management: Approaches for the Social Service Workforce. p. 4.

Providers of community-level social welfare services

Across the nine countries, CP is situated within the broader framework of social welfare work (and the even larger cross-sectoral interaction with formal health, justice, and education systems). It faces challenges from deep-rooted social norms and underinvestment in CP systems. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including faith-based organisations, have played a significant role in providing CP services at the community level, with community-level workers often remunerated or serving as unpaid volunteers in projects. There are varying degrees of independence and collaboration between governments and NGOs in different countries, with for example, a nuanced distribution of operational responsibilities in Colombia, where the government invests in formal social work cadres while NGOs address humanitarian situations. The KIIs suggest that NGO assistance that intersects with local traditional CP mechanisms is critical for effective CP, especially at times and in regions where the government is not offering the support. There are examples of government and NGOs working in cooperation, leading to a growing body of relevant policies, legislation, and guidance (Cambodia, Tanzania, and Uganda). Political challenges can however also limit the scope of engagement for NGOs in countries like India. In India, although NGOs played an active role in developing the CP sector, government functionaries now operate the formal system for the delivery of services to children in need of care and protection, and the government has well-developed institutions for training them at different levels. Although similar situations with the government taking greater control of the provision of public service should be envisaged as the goal of this work, there is still a role for NGOs to play, and they should be given space to play it to make sure that nobody is left behind in any such transition. I

Eligibility/selection criteria

Most countries in the sample lack clear eligibility criteria for workers in the CLSWW. By contrast, some provide better defined criteria for those responsible for supervising them within the formal CP system. In West African countries, such as Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso, the membership of community CP committees is guided by communities rather than by the government. While they mention informal criteria like community residence and the absence of criminal records related to child abuse, these criteria are not explicitly stated in current policies. For instance, in Burkina Faso, the process of setting up new committees often involves consulting village chiefs, and village chiefs to participate in the selection of committee members. In contrast, countries like Colombia have precisely defined eligibility criteria for the CLSWW. Requirements include being over 18 years old, residing in the community for at least one year, providing a statement of interest and a declaration of no criminal record for all household members, ensuring availability of space at home, and having a minimum level of education and a training certificate.

Job descriptions

Country-specific information on the existence or absence of job descriptions for the CLSWW is provided in Table 5 of Annex 1. Some countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, do not provide the CLSWW with formal job descriptions or written guidelines. In these countries where volunteer workers exist as part of a committee and not in their individual capacity, they are informed of their expected tasks when the committee is formed or trained for the first time. This is often aligned to project-oriented aims when NGOs are involved. Burkina Faso, on the other hand, has a clear job description for the community-level CP committee, but the document outlines general tasks without specifying the roles of individual members. Tanzania is said to have a job description prepared by the department of Gender and Children, although we could not access it. In Colombia, while the *Manual Operativo* includes a general description of community parents' duties, a specific document dedicated

to their roles and responsibilities has not been identified. Uganda has clear job descriptions for paraprofessional social workers. Vague job descriptions can hinder interactions with the formal social work system and advocacy for budgetary support or can be overwhelming as community-level social welfare workers risk overstretching beyond their capacities and competencies.

Roles and functions

Despite the lack of official guidelines, the CLSWW plays a crucial role in acting as the liaison between communities and formal social work systems. While the workers are often engaged in various roles, including providing psychosocial support and leading prevention campaigns, these responsibilities are frequently described in general terms. Other undefined functions exist, shaped by unwritten expectations, and the CLSWW often undertakes additional roles through NGO projects, extending beyond the immediate prevention and response to violence against children (VAC) by spontaneously taking charge of other aspects of child well-being that they are faced with. There may be a missed opportunity to leverage the CLSWW for child protection agenda setting. For example, the CLSWW could facilitate the collection of community perspectives on harms to children and the support needed to address them. Then, the CLSWW can liaise with actors within broader child protection systems to improve the availability of relevant services and advocate for appropriate child protection policies and rules.

Competencies

Across the nine countries, detailed lists of competencies are not consistently seen in the available documents, with variations in the availability of clear competencies for the CLSWW among the sampled countries. By contrast, Mali stands out with an extensive Competency Development Framework that categorises competencies into three areas: Knowledge, Aptitudes, and Attitudes. Competency areas include understanding VAC and other CP issues, legal instruments, and psychological first aid. Other countries, such as Tanzania, Cambodia, and India, also highlight key competencies, emphasising knowledge of relevant laws, theories, and practices, as well as skills in engagement, assessment, planning, communication, and advocacy. In contrast, Côte d'Ivoire lacks a competency list, and Burkina Faso, despite having a comprehensive job description, does not have a clear competency framework, highlighting a need for further development. Colombia's competencies for community parents are more based on historical precedent, reflecting a traditional role with shared community understanding. Key informants across countries stress the importance of strengthening the competencies of the CLSWW in three main areas: knowledge of VAC, psychosocial support for children, and the capacity to engage communities in prevention activities.

Capacity development

There is a distinction between government-provided and NGO-provided training. Government training practices are not standardised in every country, nor are they consistent across the nine countries. Burkina Faso, India, and Uganda offer comprehensive training manuals for CLSWW, covering diverse modules related to CP. Colombia provides a formal training programme lasting approximately 12 hours for community parents, with further training addressing contextual needs conducted by the government in collaboration with local partners. In Côte d'Ivoire, a lack of clarity regarding the responsible ministry for training the CLSWW has resulted in conflicting agendas and a void in coordination for capacity development. In Mali, the government is in the process of developing a training system where community members receive initial training from the government and subsequent training from NGOs. However, there is currently no standardised training procedure, and the content varies based on specific thematic interests. NGOs play a significant role in providing ad

hoc training for the CLSWW, often tailored to specific project outcomes. However, key informants noted that while beneficial for individual projects because they create a qualified body of workers able to move later between jobs, such training events can disrupt the equal progression of the CLSWW across the country, posing challenges for government-led training efforts. Such training may in the future evolve to support the gradual build up nationally of people and experience in CP that can move between roles and organisations and build the foundations for a more comprehensive CLSWW.

Supervision

Supervision practices for the CLSWW are generally conducted by individuals at higher levels within the formal CP system or the NGO (when such workers are employed by NGOs). However, there are instances where the supervisory role is not clearly defined. In Burkina Faso, a supervisory network of various governmental and non-governmental actors oversees multiple villages. The coordinator, often a public servant (and often a non-CP specialist), monitors committees without formal guidance. In Côte d'Ivoire, there are no set supervision standards for local CP committees, and formal (professional) social workers operate with autonomy, lacking guidelines.

Accreditation

Accreditation is an often-overlooked aspect across the CLSWW in the nine countries. Even in organised systems like Colombia, there is no accreditation system in place, and although the CLSWW receives training certificates these are not considered formal accreditation. The absence of accreditation systems is a common theme across the sampled countries. The evidence underscores the need for standardised government training procedures, coordination between government and NGO training efforts, and effective supervision and, if possible, accreditation systems at the community volunteer level to enhance the efficacy of the CLSWW.

Recommendations

The following recommendations result from the analysis:

1. **Country-specific context analysis relevant to the strengthening of the CLSWW should be carried out before such strengthening efforts are undertaken.** The findings of such analyses will inform what already exists and can be built upon, and facilitate a contextualised definition of the CLSWW and roles and competencies, etc., in the respective context.
2. **Definition and job description.** More work is needed to create a guiding and contextualizable overall definition of the CLSWW, which can attract greater research and action into improving their capacities and effectiveness.
3. **Legal Framework.** Recognition and professionalisation of the CLSWW needs to be accompanied by a set of national laws and policies that provide it with a nationally appropriate framework to guide its development as well as the visibility needed .
4. **Integrating and working with existing child protection arrangements at both community and national levels.** Both the literature and the key informants recommended building on existing traditional CP arrangements such as local community committees wherever these offer opportunities. When key individuals of committees are tasked with the roles and functions of the CLSWW, the supporting CP system should adapt to enhance promising and progressive traditional community CP practices.
5. **Context-appropriate CLSWW role definition.** When considering how to strengthen the CLSWW, it is useful to consider this workforce as performing a range of possible roles

depending on the context and needs of the specific location (e.g., country) rather than thinking of the CLSWW as having a fixed scope of activities that is the same in every country. For example, from those with little training, support, and supervision who may have a role limited to raising awareness and referring incidents of concern, through to those who may undertake more complex tasks, such as those working to support case management. This is similar to what is suggested by the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (GSSWA) (2017) and Ipsen (2017). This will be further explored in the reflective guidance on the strengthening of the CLSWW.

6. **Accreditation.** Accreditation issued by a professional body recognised by the government would be an important motivational part of the professionalisation of the CLSWW. In humanitarian contexts, the high turnover of CLSWW generates unhelpful recruitment, training, and supervision demands. A relevant system of accreditation can help recognise those in the CLSWW who have gone through the necessary capacity development and are eligible to move into more senior roles both in humanitarian and development contexts.
7. **Competency expectations.** Consideration should be given to a middle ground between no competency requirements and a long list of specific competencies that seem unrealistic to achieve for a CLSWW with different skills, motivation, experience to those of formal social workers. A general list of competencies should be created and routinely revised in collaboration with the CLSWW in each country, allowing for country-specific adaptation.
8. **Capacity Development.** There is a need to streamline the work of the governments, INGOs, and other relevant child protection actors, that are training the CLSWW across the country on different topics or, at times, on the same topic with different approaches. The government should play an important regulatory role in this process.
9. **Enhanced Coordination.** External actors, including INGOs, must avoid creating parallel systems for strengthening the CLSWW, regardless of the contexts where they work, with a goal of promoting sustainability and system building. In development contexts, INGOs are encouraged to contribute to the leadership of the government in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of efforts to strengthen the CLSWW. In humanitarian and nexus contexts, they should support and strengthen coordination structures and mechanisms with government (if possible) and with international organisations, such as UNICEF, to harmonise their approach.
10. **Decolonising the CLSWW.** The CLSWW should be treated as partners in the co-creation of the national CP system in collaboration with both governments and NGOs active in their country or area. Haug (2005) and Canavera and Akesson (2019) have strongly recommended localising and indigenising social work to ensure the cultural appropriateness of the system. Such a localisation process should be community-driven, requiring new timelines, milestones, and outcomes with donors so that the visions, worldviews, and working styles of the CLSWW can help to transform the national and international system affecting their ability to care for the most vulnerable children in their communities.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OBJECTIVE

Context

The social welfare workforce has become a topic of policy and practice in recent decades with the evolution of the discourse on the protection of all children from violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect through preventive and responsive services. While the workforce for health and education is visible with relatively well-defined work, the CP social welfare workforce is yet to gain the same visibility. Its relative invisibility compared to other sectors can be attributed to the cultural complexity of the issues it deals with (intersecting with taboos, social norms, victim shaming, lack of political recognition, and indifference of governments to matters believed to be in citizens' private domain). The global child rights discourse and advocacy has also over time contributed to the growing imperative of strengthening CP systems in the Global South: Across the countries in our sample, government policies and interventions to prevent and respond to CP risks and vulnerabilities are today acknowledged as political priorities requiring their embedding within existing indigenous knowledge systems and global ethical engagement principles.

Core issue

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (2022) defines the social service workforce as *"an inclusive concept referring to a broad range of governmental and non-governmental professionals and paraprofessionals who work with children, youth, adults, older persons, families, and communities to ensure healthy development and well-being"*. Of critical importance is the role of a CLSWW, volunteer or paraprofessional workers whose purpose is to expand the outreach of services (Keune, Gelauff-Hanzon, 2001). The benefits of the CLSWW are multiple, from enhanced prevention and response to violence against children, to bonding within and between communities and linking them with public services, to enhancing community preparedness to respond to local challenges (Mathbor, 2007). These community-level social welfare workers typically do not have a university degree (GSSWA, 2017), take on very different roles according to community needs (Mwansa, 2012), and work in partnership with both governmental and non-governmental institutions (Mendenhall, 2012). A better understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and functions will help efforts to enhance their capacities and competencies and ultimately improve protection outcomes for children and young people.

Purpose of the study

This study seeks to assess the roles, functions, and challenges experienced by the CLSWW across the nine countries: Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Mali, Myanmar, Tanzania, and Uganda. These countries were selected by considering geographical coverage, variance between humanitarian and development contexts, and the availability of resources and evidence appropriate to achieve the study purpose.

This study specifically looks at: (i) who serves as the first point of contact for CP within communities, (ii) the extent to which their roles are institutionalised (including the presence of policy documents regulating roles, the existence of job descriptions, related eligibility criteria, trainings, and supervisory mechanisms), and (iii) how the structural context of the CP system can affect the strengthening of the CLSWW. The results of this study will inform the development of reflective guidance on the strengthening of the CLSWW.

1.2 METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

A review of the available documents and a series of interviews with key informants from the selected countries and global experts were integrated. A first series of documents was provided by SC, particularly from the selected country offices. These documents were integrated with a review of the available literature across several online databases. A mix of search terms was used related to CP, such as social work, social welfare, child well-being, and community work, in combination with each of the countries in our sample. After excluding documents that were not useful or appropriate for this work, the process resulted in a total of 160 papers, varying from academic articles, training manuals and PowerPoints, job descriptions, draft or final national action strategies, as well as local policies and regulations. These documents were used to populate a review matrix developed in collaboration with SC, included in Annex 1.

After this initial review of the documents, an interview guide in English was drafted in collaboration with the SC team. This was then translated into French for the informants in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire and into Spanish for the informants in Colombia. In total, 15 key informants from the nine countries participated in the interviews. The interviews were mainly conducted with SC country office staff, although in Mali, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, and Tanzania the interviews included some key partners associated with national capacity development efforts of the CLSWW (such as local social workers and government officers). Finally, the interview sample was completed with the inclusion of two global experts who reviewed and helped interpret the findings that were emerging from the literature review and the interviews (See full list of key informants in Annex 2).

The Proteknôn and SC teams checked in with each other at various moments throughout the process to harmonise and align the data collection work and to incrementally develop a convergent interpretation of the evidence as the contextual realities of the nine selected countries were compared. This two-step process helped generate a large amount of contextual knowledge, summarised and critically presented in this report. The key informant interviews helped validate and most importantly expand the contextual knowledge for each country by both providing documentary evidence that was not publicly available and commenting on the practical realities that the CLSWW experience.

1.3 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

This research process encountered three major limitations.

1. Not being able to interview CLSWWs directly because of time and resource constraints was an impediment in understanding the constraints within which they operate and are supervised and managed. This challenge was compounded by the literature on the CLSWW being scarce. This limited availability partly reflects a complex and under-researched field of policy and action, with at times contradictory understandings of who is part of it.
2. A substantial proportion of the documents that emerged from the literature review were either not related to the countries in our study, focusing on social workers working outside communities (rather than the CLSWW), or were very specific (such as PowerPoint training slides) rather than documentation and analysis of the situation and experiences of practitioners.
3. Documents without proper or missing titles, authors, and dates pose difficulties in locating and processing the information in a particular context and do not lend themselves to citation. Many documents seemed dated and there seemed to be limited or reduced relevance in light of changes or developments that happened afterwards. The documents did provide some

information on the roles and responsibilities of the CLSWW, but it was not clear if they related to the existing workforce or were proposals.

2. OPERATIONALISING EXISTING DEFINITIONS AND FRAMEWORKS

Significance of contextual appropriateness of social work practices

Social work has always been, since its very origin in the post-Industrial Revolution in England (Cox and Pawar, 2013; Green and Clarke, 2016), a field of practice where volunteers traditionally played an important role. At its emergence, in the mid-18th century, two views existed on its purpose: 1) the need to help groups of people challenge the structural conditions that generated injustice or unequal living patterns for them, or 2) help individuals adapt to their local circumstance. As the latter view rose to the fore, its operationalisation largely relied on volunteers (attached to hospitals, courts, or prisons) offering vulnerable people practical assistance, advice, and support (Pierson, 2016). Despite the traditional reliance of social work practice on volunteers, one of the biggest challenges in conducting documentary research on the social welfare workforce operating in low- and middle-income countries at community level (which is, in fact, largely operating on a voluntary basis) is the scarce amount of evidence available. While there is a good amount of research available conducted in the Global North on social workers operating (mostly in the health sector) at community level (e.g., Simmons, 1994; Bailey and McNally Koney, 1996; Egan and Kadhusin, 2007), less is available on the role that community-level workers and volunteers are playing in the Global South, especially in the field of CP.

In a seminal work on social work and social development in Africa, Butterfield and Abyle (2013) provided empirical and theoretical contributions which added to the scarcity of African-produced literature on the topic, but, none of the chapters look in detail at the challenges and opportunities presented to the CLSWW. More recently, the Handbook of Social Work and Social Development in Africa (Gray, 2017) includes a variety of chapters looking at the implications for social work of the challenges that the continent is facing at the turn of the second decade in this millennium. In this handbook, a contribution by Ragab is worth mentioning for the purpose of this study. Ragab (2017) presents a sobering take on the importance of moving beyond indigenisation of social work. As social work comes of age, Ragab warned, it is important to understand that its idea might be universal, but the cultural practices in which it is inscribed demand contextualisation work that is grounded in devising the most appropriate cultural skills, practices, and priorities for the CLSWW. Ragab thus recommends abandoning the idea of a universal set of competencies that social workers are supposed to hold across countries (or, in certain cases, even across one country at all). This demands us to consider the possibility of providing competency-based capacity development guidance packages that are adaptable and that can be highly contextualised to match local needs and sociocultural norms and worldviews. This is the approach taken in the reflective guidance.

In Uganda, a country that is also part of the sample, Bukuluki and colleagues (2017) traced the history of the colonial social welfare system that ran contrary to the local collectivist cultural system. Despite the attacks of the colonial and post-colonial eras on traditional social welfare mechanisms, the authors suggest that collectivist systems held strong until the structural adjustments period pushed national policies (subsequently followed by NGO interventions) that favoured individual case management solutions. They paint a social work system that is today severely understaffed, with little budgetary resources, often far from the people they are supposed to help, and, most importantly, the lack of professional regulations with no minimum standards for social work practice. Looking specifically at

the challenges faced by the northern part of the country, Namuggala and Katende (2017) recommend NGOs seek a holistic approach to social work, abandoning the idea of training individuals and working instead with community members so that they themselves can lead the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of their social work projects. Finally, Twikirize (2017) provides a list of challenges that social workers working for the NGO sector are experiencing in Uganda, including curtailed activism, donor dependence, accountability, and legitimacy. Twikirize suggests that NGOs are post-colonial phenomena, arising in a context of severely depleted services, but that—as the tide is changing and governments are becoming stronger—government-owned development will be able to replace NGOs in ways that are critical for social workers to understand and master.

In Tanzania, Omari, Linsk, and Mason (2017) found that the main challenges affecting the social welfare workforce include (as in Uganda) severe understaffing, an overreliance on development funding that constraints resource mobilisation and advocacy, and generally poor management of the existing resources. To overcome these challenges, CSOs and NGOs have trained a large cadre of paraprofessional social workers—community volunteers—specifically focusing their efforts on children and HIV/AIDS. This work was conducted by the Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in collaboration with a series of international academic institutions. Their training included 10 days of introduction to paraprofessional social work, three to six months of supervised fieldwork, and six days of practising skills to intervene with most vulnerable children and families (see Annex 1).

The challenges mentioned by Omari, Linsk, and Mason above echo those that were found by Sommanustweechai and colleagues (2016) in Myanmar. Studying the role of health workers in hard-to-reach areas of the country, the authors found convincing evidence of both the importance that community-level workers play and the high value that the formal system places on these workers. However, despite their role being acknowledged as important in theory, these community workers often lack the financial means to carry out their work effectively and need continuous learning to avoid becoming a service disconnected from both the reality of their community and the operational procedures of the formal system. Non-financial incentives (such as awards that granted them social recognition) helped address the lack of compensation.

In Colombia, Hinestroza and Ioakimidis (2011) came to similar conclusions on the importance of abandoning American and Eurocentric approaches when working with oppressed groups. They raise important questions on the extent to which grassroots emancipatory practices with oppressed groups, in which the CLSWW could play a key role as intervention designers and implementers, might be more appropriate than (or at least as appropriate as) standardised case management strategies. The former, they argue, have the potential to facilitate awareness raising processes that empower oppressed populations with the means to challenge the broader context of political struggles that created their marginalisation in the first place, creating the conditions for a systemic change that would create a more protective social status quo for children.

In India, Pandya (2016) looked at the importance of contextualising social work practice not only within existing cultural and social world views, but also within spiritual and religious ones. More specifically, Pandya looks at the possible tension between religious practices that highlight the importance of the internal conditions of the implementer and social work models that aim at achieving transformation of the recipient. In such a fertile environment, the manifestation of social service in guru-led movements contributed to transforming the work of the gurus in ways that align with global understandings of social work: from a spiritual-sacred and privatised spiritual work to a public and social capital-focused approach to religion and faith.

These country-specific cases that take into account and value community-driven CP solutions echo what others have said in the global literature: As a large number of commentators have mentioned (see, for instance, the Handbook of Critical Social work by Webb, 2019), we seem to be experiencing a shift from radical social work (aimed at alleviating, rather than addressing, the negative consequences of a capitalist society on resource-deprived individuals, such as those living in rural areas of low and middle-income countries), to critical social work, that eventually aims at transforming the conditions in which social workers find themselves. A critical social work approach partners with the CLSWW to transform the conditions in which they operate in ways that are meaningful to them and the people they work with. Kemp, Whittaker, and Tracy (2002) further advocate for critical social work practice that can ensure a deep contextualisation of social work practice in space and time. Cislaghi (2013) and Wessels (2015) recommend creating CP systems that invest in community-driven action to strengthen the social fabric of the communities and their linkages with the formal system.

Understanding Community-Level Social Welfare Workforce definitions

The studies outlined above are the few exceptions to the general dearth of information and evidence on the role that community volunteers and paraprofessional social workers play in low- and middle-income countries. International coalitions have recognised and have begun to address this important gap in the global literature. In 2015, the interest group on Paraprofessionals in the Social Welfare Workforce, part of the GSSWA, suggested these workers are "typically not university educated", "take on a myriad of titles and roles within the larger social welfare system", "work under supervision of professionals in various fields", and "may be trained to help make decisions about services and supports". They can be paid or unpaid volunteers in either government or civil society structures. They can either be called (where more specific professional categories exist) paraprofessional workers, auxiliary childcare workers, or social work assistants—but more often (where similar specialty areas do not exist), they are simply called outreach or community workers. These paraprofessional social service workers receive foundational training courses on basic social service delivery (that vary by context and need).

Another important work useful to define the CLSWW is that by Ipsen (2017), who reviewed models and categories of social workers in the countries where SC operates. Despite the lack of an organisational definition, Ipsen provided three to inspire further conversation leading to a shared and agreed definition that, up to today, does not exist. The first is that given in 2015 by Dr Linsk, from the University of Chicago: "The term 'para' is defined as 'next to' or 'alongside of'. The paraprofessional would typically work next to or support the work of a professional in the same field. A paraprofessional worker is trained to perform certain functions but not always legally certified or licensed to practise as a full professional, which in some fields requires college or university degrees or specialised training. A Paraprofessional Social Worker (PSW) is a supervised paraprofessional staff or volunteer—often community-based—who serves the needs of vulnerable individuals, including children and families, particularly where social welfare systems are underdeveloped, low capacitated, or severely stretched".

The second is a 1991 definition provided by Professor Brawley: "Paraprofessionals are defined as those persons who are engaged in the provision of social care or social service to individuals, families, groups, and communities but who do not have professional training or qualifications. They may have received some college training, participated in in-service training provided by government agencies or employers, or received no specific training for their jobs".

The third definition Ipsen reports is in the 2017 Report on Paraprofessionals in the social welfare workforce. This definition draws on the 2015 report mentioned above: "Paraprofessionals work alongside professionals and their work makes vital contributions to the welfare and quality of life of

vulnerable people and their families. They work with ongoing supervision from professionals in various fields and may be trained to help make decisions about services and supports. However, in some areas the professional workforce supply is insufficient; in these cases, paraprofessionals may be deployed but will require not only comprehensive training but resources and support to ensure quality of services. They may be identified as volunteers, community workers or by other names specific to a particular programme or function. Where more specific professional categories exist, they may have titles related to these groups, such as paraprofessional workers, auxiliary child and youth care workers or social work assistants".

Ipsen (2017) also puts forward a potential attempt to define paraprofessional social workers as workers who "focus on vulnerable children and child protection issues but their work at the community level may apply to other vulnerable populations as well, such as the elderly, people living with disabilities, people with mental health issues, or key populations at risk for or infected with HIV, among others". These initial endeavours to define the CLSWW have not been followed by a systematised attempt to bring these definitions together.

The more recent (2021) Community Engagement in Case Management study published by the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (the Alliance) defines community volunteers as individuals from the affected community who "volunteer" through some form of agreement with a local community-based organisation (CBO), a local NGO, or an international NGO (INGO). These volunteers are from the community where they operate, have a formal agreement with the organisations they are working for, operate under a commitment limited in time (as opposed to natural helpers who voluntarily dedicate themselves to a cause in the community independently of the support of an organisation), do not have fixed education expectations (although often they should have secondary education), help with identification and referral of cases, provide minimal documentation as required, go through a brief training on CP, are supervised in groups (rather than individually), and are paid or reimbursed according to the individual agreements specific to the project under which they are employed. In a brief from the study, the Alliance provides a very helpful distinction between three categories of community-based volunteers identified in the research. These range from 1) volunteers, 2) incentive workers, and 3) Paraprofessional Case Workers (See Figure 1 below).

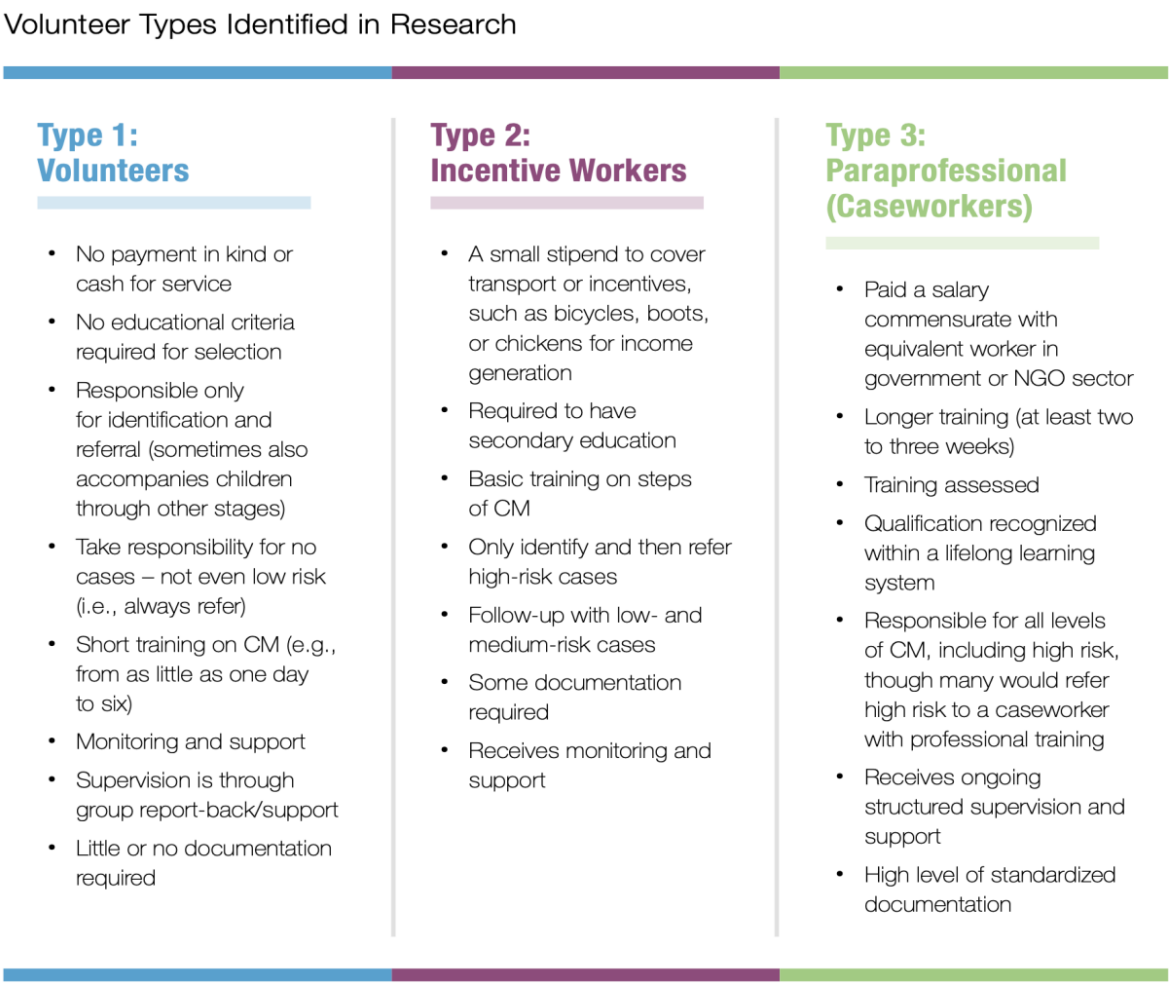

Figure 1. Types of Community-based volunteers in humanitarian action identified by the Alliance 2021 study (source: Alliance, 2021).

A recent (2023) report on the status of the social welfare workforce by the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (GSSWA) does not further define the CLSWW, but acknowledges that the social welfare workforce "constitutes a broad array of practitioners, researchers, managers, and educators, including but not limited to, social workers, social educators, social pedagogues, child care workers, youth workers, child and youth care workers, community development workers/community liaison officers, community workers, welfare officers, social/cultural animators, and case managers".

While providing an interesting avenue for further conversation and synergy, all these definitions (that focus on individuals but not committees carrying out similar roles) struggle to merge across two worlds; they are, in other words, wrestling with the challenge of providing a unifying definition for those willing to support and work with the CLSWW around the globe while, at the same time, trying to provide a definition that is flexible enough to encompass the extremely varied range of statuses, functions, roles, competencies, and frameworks that affect the work of the people protecting and promoting children's right to protection and well-being at community level.

If, on the one hand, the few definitions of the CLSWW are rare and at times contrasting, the same can be said about the competencies that these workers are expected to have. Part of the reason for the lack of a universal vision for how to strengthen the CLSWW might be found in the need to deeply contextualise the indigenisation and localisation of CP practices.

Nonetheless, Ipsen (2017) suggested the possibility of a general framework of competencies for paraprofessional social workers resulting from specific functions that the CLSWW might be called to cover. These functions include: 1) Use of communication to engage clients and obtain needed information; 2) Applying knowledge related to client needs; 3) Direct work with children, their families, and other vulnerable populations: case management and service coordination; 4) Direct work with children, their families, and other vulnerable populations: supportive direct services; 5) Work with communities, teams, and organisations; 6) Advocacy; and 7) Developing self and others. Each of these functions includes a list of practice and training competencies with the recommendation for their further adaptation to the context in which the CLSWW works and operates.

This study has been informed by the awareness of these complex, and at times contradictory, definitions in a literature body that mostly looks at formal social workers, with a niche on the CLSWW occupied by a scarce number of papers and reports. The key informant interviews contributed to expanding the understanding of what these workers are called, what functions they cover, and the extent to which their governments are prioritising supporting them and their work.

3. STATE OF PLAY OF THE COMMUNITY-LEVEL SOCIAL WELFARE WORKFORCE IN THE STUDY COUNTRIES

In this section, we report what emerged from the review of the literature relevant to the countries in the sample and the interviews with key informants from these countries. The landscape that emerges is one where the CLSWW is loosely defined, under-resourced with vague or no job descriptions (including on their roles and competencies), and with little training or supervision. There is, however, growing interest of governments in the functioning of the CLSWW that is demonstrated by the increased presence of legal frameworks and guidelines. Whether this trend is perfunctory or real (i.e., accompanied by adequate investment by governments) was questioned by some of the key informants. In a complex development scenario, where in practice NGOs have taken on many governments' responsibilities, several issues need to be considered when assessing the state of the CLSWW. Key informants suggested repeatedly that governments should set the standards (on, for instance, supervision, capacity building, performance assessment, etc.) to which NGOs and civil society should (and, in many cases do) adhere and contribute to.

3.1 DEFINING THE COMMUNITY-LEVEL SOCIAL WELFARE WORKFORCE

Across the country-specific literature, and in the KIIs, there are different understandings on who is part of the CLSWW, to the extent that some commentators have argued that the lack of clear definitions are some of the most serious issues to be resolved before the survival of social work can be guaranteed (Lymbery, 2001). Online search terms used to study the countries in the sample included community-level social welfare workforce and similar (e.g., community child protection, community social work, community workers) and mostly resulted in literature on either:

1. community health worker volunteers (who have existed as formal parts of the government health system for a long time and whose work has been studied extensively), or
2. formal social workers responsible for being points of contact for case management when these cases are brought to them.

A range of understandings, roles, functions, and practices emerged across the countries in the dataset specifically mapping who is helping prevent and respond to CP issues within communities, how they

are doing this, the extent to which their role is institutionalised, who is training and supervising them, and the practical challenges (and there are many, as we describe later below) connected to their duties.

For this study, building on the existing literature (e.g., UNICEF, 2019) as well as the work of the interest group on Paraprofessional Workers in the Social Welfare Workforce, the following definition of the CLSWW (provided by SC) is proposed:

> "The Community-Level Social Welfare Workforce, despite its diversity of roles, functions, institutional settings, and job titles, shares a common fundamental purpose—to work with communities, including children themselves, to support them in keeping their children safe. As volunteers, paraprofessionals, and professionals they deliver this support according to their different levels of training, experience, community needs and expectations, and defined responsibilities (as a full-time worker or as part of the broader roles of the workforce). The preventative, responsive, and promotive support and services to families and children in their communities are informed by the context, and could include understanding their individual and collective needs, facilitating access to appropriate support and services, reducing discrimination, promoting social justice, and preventing and responding to violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect, and family separation."[3]

Using this definition, the work of the CLSWW within the countries in the sample is further explored, including areas that require further discussion to reach greater definitional agreement.

Formalisation

In each of these countries the government is at a different level of formalisation and inclusion of the CLSWW within formal CP services (see Table 1 of Annex 1). In Tanzania, the informants mentioned that the government has eventually started considering the institutionalisation of community CP coordinators after lobbying by NGOs operating in the country who witnessed first-hand their potential. The concept of a professionally trained CLSWW with requisite skills and competencies in the formal systems is relatively new and still evolving in India[4] with efforts underway to establish District Child Protection Units (DCPUs) with specific positions for specialised work, including social workers for CP work related to institutional and non-institutional care supported by outreach workers. Government documents mention outreach workers, but their operationalisation has not yet received much attention.

Although the importance of the CLSWW has been acknowledged in policy in Cambodia—where efforts are underway to articulate their roles, responsibilities, and functions—the resource constrained government is heavily dependent on external funding for operationalising the policy and plans.

As some of the key informants mentioned, the formal CP system tends to be more present and easily accessible in urban areas, where people have better access to information, other essential services, and law enforcement agencies. Partially also because of this, most CLSWW work in rural settings

[3] This definition partly draws upon the GSSWA definition of social service worker. See GSSWA, 2018. Core Concepts and Principles of Effective Case Management: Approaches for the Social Service Workforce. p. 4.
[4] Alena Sherman, Developing a framework for a strengthened child protection workforce in India. July 15, 2021.

while a limited number of workers perform their role in filling specific gap in child protection service delivery in under-served urban areas.

Community-level committees

In Mali, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire, CP is the responsibility of groups of people organised in committees, as the government has invested in developing traditional community strategies that preceded the inclusion of the CLSWW within the CP system. Similarly, in India, community-level committees were integrated in the formal CP system as the primary mechanisms for the delivery of CP services in 2009. Subsequent laws and programmes have begun the process of formalising the roles and responsibilities of the functionaries of the formal CP system, including the CLSWW. Key informants across these countries suggested that the preference for using committees for the CLSWW (and the creation of job descriptions for these committees) is, at least in part, related to the traditional communitarian fabric of the local society and to the existence of traditional community response mechanisms that preceded modern state formation. At times, these committees, either functional or defunct, exist in parallel with individual social workers.

Traditional mechanisms vs government-created positions

In Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Colombia, the government has recognised (albeit at different levels) traditional systems that preceded the creation of a formal social welfare workforce. These efforts to integrate traditional processes within formal systems points to the need to create institutional social work structures that are both acceptable and culturally appropriate and which cooperate with those with local traditional CP responsibilities (e.g., traditional leaders). We offer further detail on the status of the CLSWW in each country in Table 1 of Annex 1.

Lessons learnt: The field could benefit from a shared definition to streamline NGO and government-led work of the community level social welfare workforce. This definition would need to be flexible enough (i.e.: not rigid) to allow the creation of a CLSWW that fits within the context and existing norms and traditional mechanisms (such as, for instance, the reliance on individuals or a committee).

3.2 NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

The system of laws and regulations governing the CLSWW across the countries in the sample reveal what *prima facie* appears to be a certain level of political interest in addressing CP issues (mostly, but not exclusively, through social work). All countries that were part of the sample have ratified the major relevant international conventions related to children's rights; many have enacted legislation regulating the reporting and response to VAC and/or have final or draft national policies or guidelines on CP. Most of these documents are relatively recent.

A variety of national legal frameworks

The nine countries in the sample are at different stages in the evolution of their CP system building/development (see Table 2 in Annex 1), which partly explains variations in or the lack of conceptualisation of the CLSWW. Cambodia has developed a plethora of laws, policies, *Prakas* (regulations), and minimum standards but is still constrained by resource deficits. India has created a blueprint of the structures required to facilitate coherent enforcement of assorted legislation, standard operating procedures, and judicial pronouncements within a federal structure of governance.

Mission Vatsalya, which was launched in 2022 as the umbrella programme for the country-wide delivery of CP services, builds on the Integrated Child Protection Scheme of 2009, which in turn was preceded by three schemes for certain categories of children. It integrates the commitments made through laws, such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act in 2000 and 2015 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act in 2012. Resource constraints are arguably due to difficulties in allocation rather than non-availability. A full list of the national laws, policies, and guidelines is available in Table 2 of Annex 1.

National guidance for roles and competencies of formal social workers and CLSWWs

Some countries have more specific guidelines on the role of formal social workers in CP. Among those who do not have such a framework—for example, Mali—the roles and responsibilities of social workers are clarified during their higher education but not set out in a guideline document. Very few countries have guidelines and policy documents documenting or clarifying the functions and roles of the CLSWW. Exceptions do exist; for example, the Colombian government has produced a *Manual Operativo* that details both the expectations for the formal services and those for the community parents. Burkina Faso has created a Reference Document for the Community Child Protection Committees that provides clarity on how the work of these volunteer committees fit within the formal system.

Transformation of policy into practice

Key informants often questioned the extent to which national policies on the CP system and the CLSWW (when existing) were supported in practice. Their comments mostly referred to the lack of budget reserved for the CLSWW. Across all countries, key informants said that the CLSWW was often called to resolve CP issues with limited or no financial assistance from the government. Lack of specific guidance on CP for the CLSWW is a major impediment to the translation of policy into practice.

Lessons Learnt: Generally speaking, countries in the sample tend to have specific guidelines on social workers rather than on the CLSWW. In the countries where the CLSWW has been recognised within state policies, its workers acquire greater legitimacy in their engagement with the formal CP system. Through its formalisation, the CLSWW might also benefit from inclusion in state budgets and potentially attempts to consider their needs and challenges in the revision or creation of national policies regulating their roles.

3.3 PROVIDERS OF COMMUNITY-LEVEL SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES

As a relatively new concept, CP must contend with deep-seated social norms, established ways of working, institutional cultures, and perennial and severe underinvestment in the prevention and response services. As a result, NGOs have been significant CP service providers at the community level in most countries.

States partnering with NGOs

In most countries in the sample (Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Tanzania, and Uganda) the governments are still relying on NGOs for a variety of services (including the training and support of the CLSWW). However, key informants reported that the governments are formalising CP committees, in part to coordinate the roles and work of the CLSWW, to ensure different NGOs do not establish project-bound (at times competing) CP committees and social welfare volunteers in the villages where they operate. Despite governments' attempts to streamline the CLSWW, including

through the formalisation of these committees and the approach to village volunteers, KIIs remarked that the governments still need to rely on NGOs to support their activities and their continuous capacity development in ways that demand future standardisation of these partnerships. In Uganda, for example, the government has standardized the approach to and training of the Para Social Workers (PSWs), with NGOs carrying out their establishment and capacity building. KIIs reported that, despite the intention of governmental and NGO actors to align their operations, they lack long-term strategic coordination in ways that limit the effectiveness and potential of the CLSWW.

States reducing the role of NGOs

In India, the role of NGOs (both within the CLSWW and more widely within development efforts) is increasingly shrinking with the government increasingly assertive in outlining the conditions and scope of development support from the donors. The spaces for consultation, cooperation, and collaboration between the government and the NGOs in CP (and other sectors as well) have reduced. In addition, and related to this shrinking space of collaboration, there is the potential risk that universal standards that NGOs strive for might be sidelined within local political governmental agendas.

While increased state ownership of the CLSWW (and, more generally, all development work) is desirable, and ultimately the final goal of NGO work, it can be argued that such shifts need to be in conversation with all actors to ensure that the most vulnerable populations currently served by NGO interventions are not left behind in the process. A contrary view is equally valid that gradual shifts are not desirable given how far behind the CP sector is. The decrease in quality of services when the government takes over may be compensated by scale and sustainability. The preferred option may be determined by the wider context as well as the spaces available for the NGOs to contribute.

States growing in independence while working with NGOs

Despite the lack of a formalised CP workforce at community level, in Colombia there seems to be a partial distribution of CP-related operational responsibilities (albeit with large overlaps) between the government and NGOs, with the latter spending more resources working to address the humanitarian situation and the government investing in training and implementing a formal social work cadre that can promote citizens' participation and investment in their own well-being. The increased government ownership of the CLSWW and the CP system ultimately has the potential to ensure greater sustainability of the CLSWW work.

Country-by-country information on the Government/NGO relationship and distribution of labour is presented in Table 3 of Annex 1.

Lessons Learnt: Several countries are moving towards increased government/NGO coordination to strengthen the CLSWW by ensuring that its workers are utilised across different NGO projects. As governments move towards greater (and, eventually, complete) programmatic independence, it is important they interface with NGO actors to limit possible gaps in the work of the CLSWW.

3.4 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Most countries in the dataset do not have clear eligibility or selection criteria for the CLSWW, with some (but not all) having better defined criteria for the people responsible for supervising the CLSWW within the wider CP system.

Community criteria predominate

Key informants from Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mali explained that the setting up of community CP committees is a participatory process with relatively little guidance from the state. The choice of the members of these committees is left to communities, as they are better placed to identify people with the necessary motivation and standing. The criteria that the governments set for committee membership—beyond motivation to work on CP and availability of time—is that they reside in the community and do not have a criminal background, specifically related to cases of violence or abuse of children. Despite the reference to these *de facto* informal criteria in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso, according to key informants, these criteria are not formally stated in any current policies. In Burkina Faso, for instance, key informants said that often when they need to set up new committees, in practice they visit the village chiefs and ask them to nominate members of the committee in their areas.

Clearly defined state criteria

Colombia has set precise requirements and eligibility criteria for the community parents who are required to be over 18 years old, have resided in the community for at least a year, have a written statement of interest, and have a declaration of no criminal record for all people in the household. They also need to be able to ensure availability of space at home and have both a minimum level of education and a training certificate in hygienic practices in food handling. There are no set criteria for other ad hoc community volunteers and every NGO working with them has their own eligibility processes. A complete list of eligibility criteria (where it exists) required for the CLSWW for each country in the sample is included in Table 4 of Annex 1.

Lessons Learnt: Countries with clearly defined criteria benefit from the setting of a minimum benchmark for community-level social welfare workers, with specific criteria when CLSWW need to address very specific topics. A list of eligibility criteria should be flexible and adaptable to the local needs of the CLSWW and context.

3.5 JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The CLSWW operates mostly at the micro level, providing a link between the formal services and the communities in which they operate. While the next section looks specifically at the roles that the CLSWW is required to cover in their work, this section looks at the presence and formality of the job description.

Absence of a formal standardised written job description

A few countries in the sample do not provide the CLSWW with any kind of job descriptions. Côte d'Ivoire and Mali fall into this category. Key informants from these countries clarified that the CLSWW are given an indication of the kind of work that is expected from them when the community CP committees are formed or trained for the first time. When (I)NGOs approach these committees with a specific project-oriented aim, they give them new job descriptions that fit the purpose of the project. The same is true for formal social workers who are also not provided with written job descriptions but, according to KIIs, learn what is expected from them as they go through the higher education training that is required for their role designed over what key informants described as customary non-formalised duties. Similarly, in India, the Mission Vatsalya guidelines do not provide a job description for the CLSWW. While they provide the eligibility criteria for the workforce and job

descriptions for some positions, they need to be read in conjunction with other government documents, notably the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules 2016, and there is not yet much clarity about the specific role and responsibilities of outreach workers. In a pilot project in three states from 2017–2019, SC developed the job descriptions for five key positions in DCPUs by collating the information from government documents and from a series of consultations with DCPU staff in those positions, NGOs, and the Ministry of Women and Child Development, and by articulating the desirable capacities and competencies and the job description of *Community Child Protection Cadre*.

Absence of formal/specific job descriptions

Burkina Faso has been defined as having the "gold standard" for clear job descriptions for committees in the region (Canavera and Akesson, 2018). It has worked to provide both formal social workers and the CLSWW with a detailed description of the tasks expected of them. The Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and Humanitarian Action has produced a reference document for community CP committees. It provides a general 11-point list of the tasks of the committee, without specifically describing the jobs of its individual members. In its 183-page *Manual Operativo*, Colombia has included a general description of the duties that community parents are supposed to carry out, but we could not find a document specifically dedicated to their roles and responsibilities. The duties of the formal social workers in Colombia, on the other hand, include a variety of tasks reported by local researchers (e.g., Benitez and Rubiano, 2013 and Polo, 2013). In Tanzania, the key informants reported that despite the CLSWW having job descriptions, it is not clear to them (and the formal services reviewing their work) what is part of their job and what is not. The result is that the CLSWW are often overwhelmed: they are working as social workers, coordinators, and at times they also have to take on the specific roles that NGOs have in mind for them (becoming a community facilitator or a local project supervisor).

The job of the CLSWW within the formal system

The absence of job descriptions (or the presence of general job descriptions) has pros and cons. In complex community contexts, with a large variety of community practices, values, customs, and actors, rigid job descriptions might result in excessive regimentation of the cultural competency of the CLSWW to deal with cases often in ways that interlock with and fit within the existing sociocultural niche. A flexible job description might be more beneficial to support the capacity of the CLSWW, developed over socialisation within the existing cultural context, to navigate and act within existing community dynamics but might provide less guidance on what to do when the due process dictated by the formal systems runs contrary to local cultural norms. Table 5 of Annex 1 presents the available country-specific information on job descriptions for the CLSWW.

Lessons Learnt: Clear job descriptions are helpful but, for community volunteers without any formal education, might not be easily accessible or understandable. Community-level social welfare workers need streamlined job descriptions that can be easily summarised and explained to them.

3.6 ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

UNICEF (2019) categorises the variety of functions performed by social welfare workers into "promotive" services (such as overseeing the functioning of the formal system at macro level), "preventive" services (such as interventions to change social norms at the mezzo level and

parenting/caregiver support at micro level), and "response" services (such as case management, psychosocial support, counselling, and linking with other social services). Volunteers and paraprofessional social workers in the CP system perform a wide variety of functions (GSSWA, 2017), ranging from *general* functions (communicating with families, facilitating psychosocial assessment of needs, participating in the development of basic service plans, providing supportive counselling, providing support and referral, documenting services provided, holding and applying knowledge on ethical guidelines and children's rights, promoting child participation, recognising signs of violence, conducting community outreach, disseminating policy information, and participating in activity monitoring and evaluation), as well as functions *specific for engagement with child and young people*, such as contributing to multidisciplinary action to guarantee the best interest of the child, coordinating experiences leading to children's growth and development, assessing the needs of children with disabilities and the needs of their parents (GSSWA, 2017).

In Uganda, guidelines for the engagement of PSWs were developed in 2019 in response to the lack of a proper description or delineation of their functions and activities within and across counties. The Draft Child Policy and Implementation Plan (DCPIP) Section 2.5.2 (Strengthening the social service workforce) specifically mentioned standardisation of PSW engagement as an important national priority. These guidelines create three categories or levels of PSWs with designations of 1) PSW, 2) Parish PSW Team Leader, and 3) Sub-County PSW Team Leader to foster upward mobility within the PSW system while providing increased access to support and guidance for the PSWs downstream. The PSWs are expected to possess the applicable values, knowledge, and skills for working with those who are at a disadvantage and have experienced poverty, discrimination, injustice, physical or mental abuse, severe trauma, or other types of hardships and challenges. They are also expected to work in accordance with a code of ethics that the National Association of Social Workers has developed based on the existing code of conduct for professional social workers, undergo pre-service and in-service training, and along with the certificates of attendance of training, acquire and maintain certificates of "good standing" based on their performance.

Despite the absence of job descriptions in most countries in the sample, it is possible to summarise below (from the available literature and KIIs) some of the roles and functions that the CLSWW are expected ideally to cover within the CP system.

Operational contexts

CLSWWs are mostly present in the villages and rural areas of the country. Within larger urban settings they are less present, as people have better access to formal social work and other services. However, children and their families, affected by unsafe migration, are increasingly facing challenges in accessing appropriate support and services in a timely manner due to a lack of information, and oftentimes, civil documentation. The CLSWW is expected to work across different settings, including urban and rural, development and humanitarian, with a focus on hard-to-reach areas and populations. A question for further reflection and discussion is whether the CLSWW is only relevant in rural areas or has the potential to also work efficiently for those who can more easily access formal services in urban contexts.

A liaison between communities and the formal system

The primary reason for the establishment of the CLSWW is ideally to allow the formal social work system to have a constant presence across the volunteers' area of operation. Community-level social welfare workers can signal to the relevant services the need for intervention, as well as conduct primary prevention and response for CP issues (mostly for low-risk cases), based on their in-depth

contextual knowledge and understanding. Across the sample, there was great variety in the formally recognised roles of the CLSWW, with some interesting similarities across countries within the same geographical area. In the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries in the sample (Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Tanzania), the CLSWW are unpaid and unreimbursed volunteers from (and living within) the village where they operate. Their usefulness is strongly connected to:

1. their compensating for the lack of formal services in areas that are too large and sparsely populated for the state services to cover them with assiduity,
2. their capacity to compromise with and operate within community norms and traditional reparation strategies,
3. their capacity to liaise between community members and formal actors as cultural interpreters navigating existing power dynamics within their setting.

In their liaising work, volunteers struggle with lack of compensation or reimbursement of work-related expenses. Lack of financial support partly contributes to a high turnover, as volunteers seek positions in other community-based domains with larger budget availability (such as health and education).

Strong focus on case identification and referral (and beyond, support roles in case management)

Across all the countries in the sample, the CLSWW contributed to case identification and management. All countries (either formally or informally) believe that the CLSWW should identify, report, and refer CP cases. Several countries also expect the CLSWW to provide first-response psychosocial support. However, there is greater variability with regards to roles within the provision of case-based support at the community level (such as mobilising community and external resources for children in need, conducting home visits to speak with caregivers for family strengthening, and ongoing monitoring or assessment of the children's situation). As an example, Mali's national framework for management of cases of violence mentions that the CLSWW participates in the identification of cases of violence (where possible, with the acknowledgement that many cases cannot be identified and require safe reporting mechanisms). Mali's Competency Development Framework for the management of cases of violence against children similarly highlights that community actors should support case management processes by intervening at "key stages". Because there are no other documents detailing their role or function, it is not clear whether there is an expectation for them to also carry out prevention and support functions. In Colombia, community parents are mostly involved in reporting cases of violence while much of their early child development work also indirectly contributes to a protective environment for children. Furthermore, in most countries, CLSWW also takes responsibility to lead violence prevention (and, more generally, child rights promotion) campaigns and awareness raising in their communities.

CLSWW in humanitarian and nexus contexts

In the humanitarian space, the community workforce is increasingly expected to become the frontline of prevention of and response to CP risks and threats. The CLSWW in Myanmar provide information and recognize issues affecting safety and protection of children, work with communities and service providers to elicit support for vulnerable children, in addition to provision of case-based support for children experiencing relatively lower risk. Although the humanitarian crisis has posed challenges to the workforce in accessing technical supervision and training, key informants suggest that they are playing an important role in CP to the best of their abilities together with community members amidst population displacement and socio-political uncertainty. In Colombia, we found that there is no

CLSWW specifically dedicated to CP. The closest to this role are "community parents" (almost always mothers). These community parents cover the role of parenting the children of other parents who cannot spend time with them (because they are at work, for instance—the KII underlined these parents include sex workers who cannot take care of their children at night). The relevance of their role for CP is that they are required to report cases of violence when they identify them. They have now been formalised as government actors paid and trained directly by the government.

Undefined and additional roles

In many countries, unwritten expectations exist about the roles that community-level social welfare workers are expected to cover. These include, for example, ensuring that children living on the streets can find a home in the village where the worker is located. For example, in Burkina Faso, CLSWW is expected to (beyond managing cases of violence): promote children's rights-related activities at the community level, community participation in CP initiatives, and endogenous CP mechanisms. Beside these "undefined" functions, there are many NGO projects that consistently work with the CLSWW, requesting them to cover a variety of roles and responsibilities beyond the immediate prevention and response to CP cases/violations. These responsibilities can include community mobilisation, early childcare and development, WASH, reproductive and sexual health, etc. In the presence of multiple and perhaps conflicting priorities, community-level social welfare workers contracted by NGOs may have to prioritise the delivery of services for which they are receiving financial compensation and deprioritise their largely unpaid and unreimbursed roles as part of the governmental CP system.

An increasing presence of gender transformative aspects in CP

In recent times and across several organisations, gender has become a privileged entry point of analysis and action in CP work, above other intersectional categories of social discrimination. In many countries, among those included in the sample, the roles of the CLSWW in managing cases of VAC are often associated with reporting cases of GBV or there is a higher focus on violence against girls, as compared to general VAC in ways that, as some key informants suggested, at times risks neglecting boys.

Greater expectations towards the CLSWW to work as part of broader social welfare and social protection systems

In view of resource constraints, a proposal was mooted in Uganda that the CP system should be integrated within a larger social work system addressing the needs of all vulnerable people, not just children. In this revised system, at the local government level, the same Community Development Officer (CDO) would deal with all cases of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation, including harmful practices (such as corporal punishment, child marriages, and female genital cutting), regardless of the gender or age of the victim.[5] As the CDOs are not professional social workers, UNICEF and SC, together with the government, discussed the creation of a level between the CDOs at sub-county level and the PSWs to handle case management. The same could be potentially imagined for the CLSWW in general: When a government lacks the human resources to create systems that protect and promote the rights of specific categories of people (e.g., children), the government might think it may make sense to have a CLSWW that works on CP as part of a holistic social welfare and social protection system for all vulnerable people . The Cambodia CLSWW is also expected to coordinate

[5] CONCEPT NOTE PSSP (+recruitment of Assistant Welfare Officers (8.7.2019).docx

the development of veterans in the community as well as the community-based elderly care programme, which is part of the broader social protection system.

A missed opportunity?

One of the key informants made an excellent point when commenting on the general state of how the CLSWW is involved in the formal system largely as executors of national guidelines and visions. Their presence in the community offers instead the invaluable opportunity to create bottom-up CP and rights policies, working with CLSWW as a force for citizen participation and democratic agenda setting related to child protection. Taking into account their (volunteer) role and workload, the hope is that the government devises systems and procedures to engage in regular fora (potentially virtually or through formal workers in the CP system as mediators) so that the CLSWW (particularly CLSWW committees) can have the resources to contribute to reporting community visions, hopes, desires, and needs to the government for transformation into political strategy and action, with regards to the protection and well-being of children. Key informants suggested that so far this has not been possible due to two reasons. The first is the pressure of donors to achieve donor-set outcomes within donor-set milestones that do not allow for longer community-led processes and functions. The second reason is the vagueness in job descriptions that evidences a lack of clarity at the government level on how to engage and work with the CLSWW, including their potential as collaborators in the creation or revision of the policies affecting children. The available information on the roles that the CLSWW cover in the nine countries can be found in Table 6 of Annex 1.

Lessons Learnt: The roles and functions of CLSWW are highly diverse but not always stated formally or acknowledged. There seems to be potential for improving their work by teasing out these roles and functions at the national level in a co-creational exercise involving them, the government, and other actors in the sector.

3.7 COMPETENCIES

While Mali and Tanzania have a clear competency list for the CLSWW (see below), other countries in our sample do not possess one. Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, is one of the countries without a competency list for the CLSWW. Despite having a good job description, Burkina Faso does not have, at the time of writing this report, a clear competency framework either—something which the key informants reflected as a necessary next step. In Colombia, where the government has established a complete and well-structured list of expectations and essential criteria for community parents, they are not provided with a list of competencies. In India, SC has helped to develop occupational standards for social workers (including the CLSWW). These standards include a job description, eligibility criteria, and performance criteria, but lack a competency list.

Detailed competency lists

Extensive competency lists have been developed in a few countries for different actors in the CP system, although they are generally not explicitly linked to the roles and responsibilities that these countries designate to the CLSWW. Mali is one exception: Their precise and detailed competency list for the CLSWW is connected to the description of roles and responsibilities. The Mali government's Competency Development Framework details the competencies required by community actors, case managers, and supervisors. The document specifically organises their competencies across three areas: 1) Knowledge (e.g., what is VAC, CP issues, legal instruments, how VAC affects children, psychological first aid, service system); 2) Aptitudes or know-how (e.g., how to reconcile social and

legal norms; how to determine the best interest of the child; how to detect signs of stress and anxiety in childhood; how to adapt their actions to take into account culture, gender, and diversity of the child); and 3) Attitudes or know-how (e.g., sensitivity, objectivity, integrity, rigour, diplomacy, empathy, negotiation, professionalism). In Cambodia, the guidelines on basic competencies for the social welfare workforce emphasise: 1) Values and ethics, 2) Knowledge of the theories for basic social work, practice models, national policies and laws, and international legal standards, and 3) Skills (e.g., engagement, assessment, service planning, implementation and follow-up, documentation, monitoring, communication, interpersonal, networking and advocacy, analytic, self-reflection, and self-care).

Desired competencies and skills

Key informants provided several comments on the competencies they thought the CLSWW should have. We have provided a summary immediately below as well as a short country-by-country overview, due to the strategic importance of this information for the SC team. Informants' suggestions on how to strengthen the competencies of the CLSWW can be summarised in three areas. The first is knowledge of VAC, their role, the formal system (including reporting and privacy), children's rights, and child protection issues (with a focus on the changing conditions affecting each country). The second area is psychosocial support to children. The third area is the capacity to engage communities in prevention activities.

In Burkina Faso, there is a need to address the rapidly changing scenario of the humanitarian situation that is presenting very different challenges as the CLSWW now act on issues of violence and exploitation related to the humanitarian crisis—for example, children associated with armed forces and armed groups and the challenges with their reintegration. Community-level social welfare workers therefore need new and stronger capacity to understand and act on these emerging issues. Key informants also suggested that the CLSWW could be helped by building greater capacity to recognise children who experience violence and reach out to the formal system while respecting the privacy of all parties involved. Community-level social welfare workers also need greater support to develop effective psychological first aid skills (since they are the first point of contact for children who experience violence) as well as stronger community sensitisation competencies. Informants also suggested an urgent need to develop local language skills (that represent serious barriers between the children and the CLSWW) as well as writing skills (as, often, CLSWW cannot fill the form when they visit the formal services).

In Tanzania, the key informants suggested the competencies of the CLSWW should include five areas: 1) Full knowledge of the Child Act; 2) Knowledge of various topics on child protection: what is it, what it includes; 3) Child Participation skills; 4) Psychosocial support; and 5) A basic understanding of case management.

In Colombia, which has a humanitarian context like Burkina Faso albeit with clear major contextual differences, informants reported the need to strengthen the capacity of community parents to be able to act on the challenges presented by the ongoing armed conflict. Informants also suggested that community parents need to have a greater understanding and updated knowledge of the existing government policies and strategies with a focus on human rights-based approaches and strategies for citizen participation. The community parents could benefit from a deeper capacity to envision and implement strategies to promote and protect children's rights in their localities.

In Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, informants reported similar needs, beginning with the imperative of timely training from the inception of the committee that forms the basis of the CLSWW in these countries. Committee members need to know their mission, roles, and responsibilities. Currently, they struggle

to recognize cases of violence and abuse and create a confidential and safe space for cases to be reported to them. They need more support and greater capacity to offer psychological first aid. They also need to be trained in revenue generating activities so that they can ensure the financial means needed to implement the duties of their job. There is also a need to have their role formalised by the state, which would help them feel greater responsibility for their work.

Lessons Learnt: Some countries have extensive competency lists, but others do not. Some of the functions that they are expected to perform require formal education, which is almost never a required competency. Different competencies for different roles of the CLSWW could be identified at country level as required.

3.8 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Across the spectrum of the countries in the sample, we found a distinction between the training in terms of structure, content, and duration that is provided by the government, especially in countries where the role of the CLSWW is institutionalised, and the training provided by local and international NGOs (see below). We also found a variety in the extent to which the CLSWW is supervised and the kind of supervision they receive.

Government Training

We found limited evidence in the literature of government-provided training that the CLSWW receive, but some governments are making progress. A few notable exceptions across the dataset include Burkina Faso, Colombia, and Uganda. In Burkina Faso, the "Facilitator manual for the training of CCPE members" includes a training composed of six modules: 1) Needs and rights of children; 2) Overview of key child protection issues; 3) Child protection mechanisms; 4) Identification of and support for vulnerable children; 5) Child protection in humanitarian situations; 6) Place, role, and functioning of the CCPE, Norms of action for the CCPE. In Colombia, community parents undergo a formal training at the beginning of the work that lasts approximately 12 hours. This training is provided by the government and offers basic information on their role. Further training (carried out by the government in partnership with the zonal centres and other local partners) responds to children's contextual needs (armed conflict, migration, sexual violence, etc.). In Uganda, the training are guided by the government but may be organised and conducted by other agencies.

In the other countries in the sample, key informants provided information to describe the training (or lack thereof) provided by the government. In Côte d'Ivoire, the CLSWW are under the direct or indirect coordination of multiple ministries. The conflicting agendas of these ministries, together with lack of clarity on who is ultimately responsible for the training of the CLSWW, has created a void in capacity development coordination. In Mali, the Competency Development Framework developed by the government includes a series of actions to be implemented in partnership with national and international NGOs. Key informants stated that the government is developing a training system whereby the CLSWW will be trained by the state at the beginning of the work and then later by NGOs. At present, there is no standard training procedure developed by the government, as the content of the training depends on the specific theme of interest for the area where the community-level social welfare workers are located. In India, the government has an elaborate institutional structure for the training of social workers for various sectors, including the National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) and its regional centres and State Child Protection Societies. These institutions have developed curricula and training modules for various functionaries of the CP system but not for the CLSWW.

NGO Training

There is an abundance of training provided by NGOs to the CLSWW, but their training materials are often hard to access (except for specific training PowerPoints). Across all the countries in the sample, key informants explained that NGOs provide specific and ad hoc training events for the CLSWW as and when needed for the successful achievement of project outcomes. There is a vision for greater alignment of NGO training with government directives in ways that, in the future, will be able to amplify such government initiatives, but such a vision tends to be in its nascent stages at this point in time. Similar ad hoc training sessions might potentially destabilise the equal and parallel progression of the CLSWW in the country, posing a challenge to the local governments as they try to ensure a CLSWW with similar skills for reliable employment as part of their national plans of action. It will be important to consider how collaboration between NGO and government can best serve the needs of CLSWW across countries at different stages of training (even within the same country) and potentially exposed to different understandings and views across multiple NGO trainings they might have received. This would entail systematic engagement of the NGOs with the governments for human resource development of CLSWW.

Supervisory practices

Management and social work supervision and support are usually the task of workers at the level immediately above the CLSWW within the formal social work system or the NGO implementing the project employing the CLSWW. At times, however, there is no clearly defined person tasked with this supervisory role. In Burkina Faso, for instance, supervision of the CLSWW is done by members of a child protection network that gather several governmental and non-governmental actors and multiple villages within a given geographical area. The coordinator of this network is often assigned to a public servant (a judge, a police officer, or a social worker). The job of this network is one of oversight rather than supervision: they check the effective existence of the committee, how they are working (but without any formal guidance or performance guidelines), and what issues they are currently facing. Informants in Côte d'Ivoire mentioned that there are no set supervision guidelines for the CLSWW. However, community-level social welfare workers are in contact with the formal social workers who, in turn, are supposed to operate under the supervision of the directors of the local social work centre. In practice, however, the CLSWW (and local formal social workers) operate without evaluation guidelines with a good degree of autonomy. Tanzania does not have performance assessment guidelines for the CLSWW (although they do organise a yearly award to elect the coordinator of the year based on the number of cases reported by coordinators). The occupational standards developed by SC in India in collaboration with three state governments include performance criteria with reference to the scope of work of the functionaries of DCPUs.

In terms of supervision, in many contexts, CLSWW do not even know who their technical supervisors are, which is a significant gap given the criticality of supervision. It is not surprising that the training of CLSWW tends to be neither systematic nor coordinated despite several efforts by the government and NGOs. Even if the supervisors exist, they try to resolve day-to-day problems instead of developing their competencies. Guidelines for supervision are uniformly lacking, especially when capacity development programmes are expected to be designed for competency enhancement.

Accreditation

Accreditation is possibly the most overlooked aspect across the CLSWW landscape in the nine countries. Even in countries as organised as Colombia, there is no system of accreditation: Colombian community parents may receive a training certificate from the educational ministries that however

does not have validity as a formal training accreditation. We were not able to find an accreditation system that is currently in place in any of the countries in the sample, although licensing and accreditation was proposed during the discussions on the Child Protection Sector Strategic Plan (CP-SSP) for 2021–2023 in Cambodia, and there have been demands for the regulation of social work towards professionalisation and formal accreditation in India.

Lessons Learnt: Training is mostly not provided in a systematic and coordinated manner. The CLSWW lack supervision and oversight (with no clear supervisory guidelines). NGO supervision is often carried out exclusively for the duration of a given project. Countries considering a range of roles for the CLSWW might assign supervision to some community-level social welfare workers who are trained and supported to carry out more complex tasks. Accreditation of training and professional experience can be an important motivator for the CLSWW and should be part of the overall package of support provided.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings from the study of the nine countries complement and expand what is found in the global literature. The challenge of the absence of formal job descriptions for the CLSWW, as highlighted in this report, aligns with the literature that underscores the pivotal role of clear and comprehensive job descriptions in guiding child protection workers and enhancing the overall effectiveness of child protection systems (Turner et al., 2017; Anderson and Thompson, 2019). Turner et al. (2017) emphasises the need for clarity in job descriptions to provide a roadmap for workers engaged in child protection, a conclusion also reached by Anderson and Thompson (2019) who have produced critical insights into the intricacies of defining roles within this sector.

The diverse roles expected of the CLSWW, despite the absence of formal job descriptions, resonates with the importance of clear roles for the CLSWW that others in the field have mentioned (Johnson & Smith, 2016; White et al., 2020). The broader discourse emphasizes the necessity of well-defined roles, which should be sufficiently flexible and potentially developed through bottom-up collaboration with communities as well as the CLSWW. These context-specific roles are essential to ensure that the CLSWW's contributions are aligned with overarching child protection objectives. Johnson and Smith (2016) have explored the role of community-based child protection mechanisms, shedding light on their significance in ensuring the safety and well-being of children. White et al. (2020) have mapped community roles in child protection in Sub-Saharan Africa, offering insights into the complexities and nuances of the functions undertaken by the CLSWW. Both studies acknowledge the complex set of roles that the CLSWW cover as they navigate the multi-faceted social dynamics of the communities in which they operate.

The absence of well-defined eligibility criteria for the CLSWW, as outlined in this report, also resonates with the discussions of several commentators in the space of child protection work (Brown et al., 2012; Jones & Miller, 2018). This report highlighted that the lack of eligibility criteria is a common issue observed in the selection of the CLSWW. Brown et al. (2012) contributes to this discourse by engaging in a scoping review on capacity building for child protection, exploring the criteria employed in selecting individuals for roles in child protection. Jones and Miller (2018) delve into the recruitment and retention of child welfare workers, offering insights into the challenges faced in ensuring that those engaged in child protection roles are well-suited for the demands of the profession.

The report's observation of variability in competency frameworks for the CLSWW and the need for more detailed guidance is reminiscent of the work of those (e.g., Gibson et al., 2014; Larkin et al., 2018) who have emphasised the risk of solidifying a list of competencies without allowing for the contextual fluidity that is inherent in addressing the complexities of child protection issues. Similarly, the discussion on the distinctions in training provided by governments and NGOs, coupled with the absence of accreditation systems, discussed in this report aligns with the literature stressing the need for standardised training programmes and the establishment of accreditation mechanisms to enhance the capacity of child protection workers (Smith & Brown, 2019; Anderson, 2021). Smith and Brown (2019) have suggested that accreditation can be an important means to enhance workforce development in child protection and welfare.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Ten recommendations are proposed to be considered in the future development of the CLSWW and to be carried over and considered in the creation of a reflective guidance on the strengthening of the CLSWW:

1. **In-depth country-specific analysis of the Child Protection System relevant to the strengthening of the CLSWW.** Actors working on the strengthening of the CLSWW should conduct an analysis of different elements of Child Protection systems in country, with a focus on the CLSWW. A process for conducting the analysis should be included in the reflective guidance. The findings from the analysis should inform the definition and job descriptions of CLSWW in the respective context.
2. **Definition and job description.** There needs to be work done to create a template definition of the CLSWW (to be contextualised and adapted across settings in ways that allow integration of traditional CP practices operating at community level) to attract greater research and action into improving their capacities and effectiveness. At the national and local levels, it is significant to recognise and acknowledge the enormous roles that the CLSWW are already performing to prevent and respond to various CP risks while being highly sensitive of the risks that they are exposed to by responding to complex CP issues.
3. **Legal Framework.** The position of the CLSWW needs to be supported by national and international legislation, policy, and guidelines related to CP to provide it with a nationally appropriate framework to guide its development as well as the visibility needed for greater recognition and professionalisation. NGOs and other external actors are strongly encouraged to draw upon and enhance the existing laws, rules, and regulations for the strengthening of the CLSWW in respective countries/regions (for example, the Hanoi Declaration of the Strengthening of Social Welfare Workforce). They also have to work to strengthen the legal framework, when and where gaps are identified.
4. **Integrating and working with existing child protection arrangements.** Both the literature and the key informants recommended building on existing traditional CP arrangements such as local community committees wherever these offer opportunities. When key individuals of committees are tasked with the roles and functions of the CLSWW, the supporting CP system should adapt to enhance promising and progressive traditional community CP practices that have helped communities protect their children for centuries (Wessels, 2015).

5. **Context-appropriate CLSWW role definition.** When considering how to strengthen the CLSWW, it may be useful to consider the CLSWW as performing a range of possible roles depending on the context and needs of the specific location (e.g., country) rather than thinking of the CLSWW as having a fixed scope of activities that is the same in every country. For example, from those with little training, support, and supervision who may have a role limited to raising awareness and referring incidents of concern, through to those who may undertake more complex tasks, such as those working to support case management. This will be further explored in the reflective guidance on the strengthening of the CLSWW. A country context analysis will guide country offices and other relevant CP actors to understand what roles are needed and advocate for and promote them.
6. **Accreditation.** Accreditation issued by a professional body recognised by the government would be an important motivational part of the professionalisation of the CLSWW. In humanitarian contexts, the high turnover of the CLSWW generates unhelpful recruitment, capacity building, and supervision. A relevant system of accreditation can help recognise those in the CLSWW who have gone through the necessary capacity development and are eligible to move into more senior roles both in humanitarian and development contexts.
7. **Competency expectations.** There should be a middle ground between no competencies required and a long list of specific competencies that seem unrealistic to achieve for a CLSWW with different skills, motivation, and experience to those of formal social workers. A general list of competencies should be created and routinely revised in collaboration with the CLSWW in each country, allowing for country-specific adaptation. At the national level, governments and external actors should ensure that competencies required for the CLSWW's roles are strategically selected, and that the list of competencies inform the capacity development programme.
8. **Capacity development.** There is also a need to streamline the work of the governments, INGOs, and other relevant child protection actors that are training the CLSWW across the country on different topics or, at times, on the same topic with different approaches. The capacity development plans need to be developed in a cohesive and coordinated manner with an important regulatory role of the governments in this process.
9. **Enhanced Coordination.** External actors, including INGOs, must avoid creating parallel systems for strengthening CLSWW, regardless of the contexts where they work, with a goal of promoting sustainability. In development contexts, INGOs are encouraged to contribute to the leadership of the government in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the efforts to strengthen the CLSWW. In humanitarian and nexus contexts, they should support and strengthen coordination structures and mechanisms with government (if possible) and with international organisations, such as UNICEF, to harmonise their approach.
10. **Decolonising the CLSWW.** The CLSWW has the potential of being engaged as partners in the co-creation of the national CP system in collaboration with both governments and NGOs active in their country or area. Haug (2005) and Canavera and Akesson (2019) have strongly recommended localising and indigenising social work to ensure the cultural appropriateness of the system. Such a localisation process should be community-led, requiring new timelines, milestones, and outcomes with donors so that the visions, worldviews, and working styles of the CLSWW can help to transform the national and international system affecting their ability to care for the most vulnerable children in their communities.

6. CONCLUSION

The CLSWW is one of the weakest components in the development and strengthening of national child protection systems due to lack of public investment as well as to issues related to deployment, capacity deficits, and weak backward and forward linkages. As has been outlined in this report, the state of the CLSWW is very different from context to context and requires solutions and capacities that are related to the very different challenges that each context presents. The CLSWW needs to be well-trained according to the roles which they are supposed to undertake, judiciously mobilised, properly coached, mentored, supervised, linked with relevant service providers, acknowledged in the formal system, financially supported, and accredited. Despite the lack of clear framework for CLSWW, this report has found evidence of a motivated volunteer and paraprofessional CLSWW that truly cares about children and does what they can do best with what they have in very challenging conditions. We hope that this report will help all national and international CP actors honour the CLSWW and find a systematic and strategic way to support them as true partners in an integrated CP system.

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ANNEX 1 – TABLES AND DOCUMENTS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW

Table 1 – Status of CLSWW in the Sample Nine Countries

Community-Level Social Welfare Workers by Country
Burkina Faso
The actors within the system of community-level CP workers include: 1. Village Development Councils (CVD), 2. Local neighbourhood or village associations (nationals, women, young people, children, parents of students), 3. Fostering families, 4. Organisations of traditional healers, 5. Community Health Workers, and 6. Water point management committees. The most important CLSSWs are, however, the members of the Community Child Protection Committees (CCPE) that have been created by the government. They are unpaid volunteers who work in partnership with the village chief.
Cambodia
Paraprofessional Social Worker: a person who accompanies or assists the work of a professional social worker. Paraprofessional social service workforce is trained to perform certain functions, but do not require certification or licensing from a public professional body in the same way as professional social workers, in some positions requiring a specialised degree. **Para-Social Worker:** a person who works in the social sector or is a volunteer who mostly works in the community with technical support from professional social service workforce or paraprofessional social workers. Non-professional social service workforce serves the needs of clients, including children and families, especially where social welfare systems are not yet established or limited. **Allied Worker:** a person who carries out social service functions but are associated with other sectors, such as education, health, and justice. Examples include nurses, lawyers, doctors, and teachers, among others. Allied workers perform a myriad of functions that enhance, support, or coordinate with those functions carried out by the social service workforce.
Colombia
The government has a history of working through community volunteers across a range of themes: water and hygiene, land management, and indigenous rights but there have not been any community volunteers specifically for CP. However, the government has integrated a traditional system of community childcare (called "community parents") within its formal social services. The community parent is essentially a local parent (mostly mothers) who takes care of groups of children. Initially self-regulated, these community parents are contracted, trained, paid, and supervised by the government. Recognised in their community "for

their solidarity, leadership capacity, community work, coexistence, and civic values", they educate children to responsible citizenship and oversee the identification and reporting of cases of violence. They also liaise with formal social work services for the identification and reporting of violence.

Other community volunteers are not strictly regulated by government policies but collaborate with the NGOs in implementing CP projects or to a lesser extent with the formal systems. They include the members of local community associations, traditional community leaders, or other capable community members, and their job changes according to the contextual needs of children around the country. For instance, much CP work at community level in the areas affected by armed conflict involves mediation, justice, and reintegration of children involved in the armed conflict.

There is also a group of trained social workers who are not based in the community but visit communities across a wide geographic area. They are formally educated to the purpose of their job and are part of the formal social work system but without a specific job description for CP. Their work focuses on community education but they are also engaged in some case identification and management and may serve as therapists after incidents that require restoration of rights.

Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire currently has little to non-existent legal framework and job descriptions. As for other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in this report, the social work system in Côte d'Ivoire draws from local volunteers of committees called Comité de Gestion de l'Enfant). These 11-people committees (that integrate both women and men) are not yet institutionalised by a national law or policy but exist across the country and have become a customary part of the national social welfare system (that is slowly moving towards their formal recognition). The formal social work system is used to working with them but doesn't share financial resources with them, which makes the work of the CLSWW almost impossible. Formal social workers that do not operate at community-level, but rather at the larger district level, work with these committees sharing with them information and skills when they can travel to their communities, often at their own expense. The salary of the social workers themselves is very low, making it impossible to provide constant support to community committees despite their motivation to do so.

India

Village Level Child Protection Committees (VLCPCs): The Integrated Child Protection Scheme in 2009 introduced a non-formal structure of village duty bearers and community members to be the link between families, communities, and the CP system.

The Guidelines for 'Mission Vatsalya' Scheme launched in 2022 provides for **social workers** (two, at least one woman) and **outreach workers** (at least two and up to a maximum of five depending on the number of blocks, geographical spread, population of the district and caseload) in the DCPU.

- **Social workers:** They are, assisted by the outreach workers, expected to coordinate field level activities in their respective cluster of sub-divisions as assigned by the District Child Protection Officer. They should be at least graduates in social work, or sociology, or social sciences from a recognised university, and should be proficient in computers.
- **Outreach workers:** They assist the social workers as well as the Protection Officers responsible for non-institutional care (i.e., sponsorship, foster care, and after care) and institutional care (i.e., child care institutions) and the Legal-cum-Probation Officer they are assigned to in the DCPU by working as a link with the community, identifying families and children at risk and offering necessary support services, developing good networking and linkages with the Anganwadi workers and the members of panchayat/local bodies at

community/block levels, and encouraging volunteerism amongst the local youth and involving them in the CP programme at block and community levels. They should have passed at least Class 12 examination conducted by a recognised Board and possess good communication skills.

Mali

Mali relies on an informal system of community-based social workers organised in CP committees. These are unpaid volunteers who work—without a budget—in partnership with other community authorities and liaise children with formal services. At their most granular level, the formal social welfare services include a system of social workers with the tasks of supervising cases of VAC within large geographical areas. The first-response actors at community levels are the volunteers that are members of the CP committees. Historically, before the government decided to formalise their role, they were volunteers put in place by international NGOs (building on traditional endogenous mechanisms), who funded their roles through specific projects limited in time. Due to the confusion created by the different NGOs (each of which created a new committee in the villages where they work) the government decided to institutionalise these committees by formalising their presence. New NGOs willing to work within a given village are required to pass through the existing committee, instead of creating a new one. The members of these committees are not paid and are not given budget lines. They are reimbursed through occasional training.

Myanmar

Community Social Workers (CSWs): The CSWs identify and refer CP cases to appropriate case management service providers. The CSWs also link children in need to appropriate social services such as education and health. Community members and community social workers should not be managing CP cases (unless a community member is a case worker).

Tanzania

PSWs, that were envisaged in the 2006 Twinning project which aimed to improve care and support for vulnerable children through strengthening of social work training programs, are essentially volunteers trained to assist in the delivery of foundational social welfare services at community level and offer psychosocial support and primarily refer clients to needed services within the community.

Village level coordinator: In Zanzibar, the government policy provides for the position of village level coordinators—one per village. These coordinators are local volunteers who are trained by NGOs to follow cases of VAC from the village to the district level.

Uganda

The terminology of the social service workforce remains relatively new with the inclusion of the first formal definition in the 2020 National Child Policy. “Paid and unpaid, governmental and non-governmental professionals and paraprofessionals working to ensure the healthy development and well-being of children and families. The social service workforce focuses on preventative, responsive and promotive programmes that support families and children in our communities by alleviating poverty, reducing discrimination, facilitating access to needed services, promoting social justice and preventing and responding to violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and family separation.

The social service workforce in Uganda is diverse (and includes those working for the government and I/NGOs as well as paraprofessionals and volunteers), operating across sectors and delivering services at different

levels of care. Government employees, such as the Probation and Social Welfare Officers, Community Development Officers, Rehabilitation Officers, Labour Officers, youth detention workers, medical social workers, and those working in refugee and humanitarian services and in police, child, and family protection units, are often the most recognised members of the social service workforce. However, most social service workers are employed by I/NGOS and have an even more diverse set of titles, and there is no legal or coordinating structure that covers the social service workforce in I/NGOs nor is there a way of collecting data from them.

The community-based services department at the district level hosts the social service workforce and has the mandate for CP service delivery and promotion of child welfare. This department reflects the roles and functions of the central level. Its structure considers the fact that childcare and protection are multisectoral and multidimensional and therefore implementation cuts across all departments. The community-based services department is headed by the District Community Development Officer (DCDO), who in turn reports to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), the overall accounting officer in the district.

Largely the roles of the social service workforce are embedded within various social protection-related laws, policies, regulations and guidelines and there is no specific mention or full explanation of the role of the social service workforce. The Ministry of Public Service has the primary mandate over all civil servants across departments, including social service staff, but the MGLSD is responsible for social care and support services and the coordination of the workforce across different sectors.

Para-social worker (PSW): As the first point of contact for the most vulnerable in the community for the delivery of appropriate social welfare and protection services to people experiencing personal difficulties, their duties include but are not limited to:

1. Identifying vulnerable populations at risk, especially vulnerable children.
2. Establishing a relationship with vulnerable groups who need service.
3. Assessing strengths and needs of vulnerable populations.
4. Developing service plans including direct support. Plans may also include coordination of services with other resources where they exist.
5. Providing supportive counselling or psychosocial support, especially during crisis.
6. Linking clients to services and following up through case management.
7. Provide ongoing support and problem solving.
8. Documenting client cases, service needs, and service provision.
9. Providing services according to their abilities and training, obtaining consultation, assistance, or referral as needed.
10. Performing routine tasks involving data collection, interviews with clients for purposes of assessing personal needs, community needs, and ideas for community or group meetings.
11. Implementing and monitoring effective social services available to the community.
12. Assessing community problems and needs.
13. Creating awareness and advocacy around community problems and needs.
14. Maintaining contact with other service agencies to assure delivery of required services.
15. Intervening with specific focus on community levels, which may include economic empowerment, engaging community stakeholders and the like on behalf of these vulnerable groups.
16. Performing other duties as deemed necessary and appropriate by the CDO.

They are expected to work alongside professional social service workers to identify and intervene with vulnerable individuals, children, and families on CP and social protection issues as allowed by law or official guidelines. However, they should not be assigned the sole responsibility for handling vulnerable groups.

Parish PSW Team Leader: a PSW in good standing who has been designated to provide support and guidance to other PSWs within their service area. In addition to carrying their own caseload, these individuals will have additional responsibilities, such as providing peer support, collating the data from their team members, and sending them on to the sub-county team leader or CDO, and relaying communication to/from CDOs and sub-county team leaders to the PSWs they oversee.

PSW Team Leader: a PSW in good standing who has been designated to provide support and guidance to Parish PSW Team Leaders. There may be multiple team leaders at this level, as determined appropriate by the CDO. In addition to carrying their own caseload, these individuals will have additional responsibilities, such as providing peer support, collating the data from their team members, and sending them on to the CDO, and relaying communication to/from CDOs and parish team leaders.

Table 2 – National Laws, Policies, Programmes, and Guidelines

Laws, policies, programmes, and guidelines by Country
Burkina Faso
The Coordinated Social Services Strengthening Initiative was launched in 2009 under the aegis of the Child Protection Working Group (GTPE) to provide and improve the response capacities of social services, which resulted in promotion of the case management approach and the CP network approach as an adequate means of offering better quality services to children. Therefore, a reference document for CP networks was drawn up by the protection actors: Document De Reference Des Cellules Communautaires De Protection De L'Enfance (CCPE). Reporting cases of violence is a legal obligation—Art. 99 law 015/2014 says that "any person, including those bound by professional secrecy, is subject to the duty to report to the juvenile judge or the prosecutor of Faso or the social worker in charge of CP anything that is to constitute a danger for the child". Burkina Faso also has a reference document for child protection networks, a case management guide revised in 2020, and case management SOPs drawn up in 2023, as well as adoption protocols and care procedures for children with disability and children encountered during operations to secure the territory. Other legal framework includes: - Law n°025-2018/the penal code, which condemns physical, sexual and emotional violence against children, lack of supervision, trafficking and smuggling of children - Law n° 029-2008/the fight against human trafficking and related practices - Law n° 11-2014/the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
Cambodia
Cambodia had developed a plethora of laws, policies, *Prakas* (regulations), and minimum standards including the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Victim Protection in 2005, Policy on Alternative Care for Children and the Minimum Standards on Residential Care in 2006, the Minimum Standards on Community-based Care in 2008, *Prakas* on Procedures to Implement Policy on Alternative Care for Children in 2009, a sub-decree on the management of residential care in 2015, an action plan to pilot improvement in child care and reintegration of children from residential care institutions to their families in five provinces in 2017, the National Social Protection Framework 2016–2025 (2017), the National Policy on Child Protection System 2019–2025 in 2020, and *Prakas* on Implementing Procedures for Kinship Care and Foster Care in 2021. In the absence of a law regulating the CLSWW, a policy draft has been developed. Meanwhile, there are guidelines for the Department of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (DoSVY) focal points, managers and supervisors for case management, procurement of supplies, preparing and looking after the workforce, working arrangements, and coordination between sectors and government. Guidelines for social workers and caseworkers regarding promotion of awareness about COVID-19 includes managing caseload during the response, establishing mechanisms to ensure that communities facing restrictions on movement have continued access to child-friendly, holistic care for children experiencing violence, in-person home visits and follow-up, mobilisation of community support, and the pursuit of a survivor-centred approach for responding to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse. Guidelines on responding to unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) and other children without parental care have been endorsed. These guidelines include hotline numbers, tips to guide caregivers and other adults in the extended family to provide emotional support and reassurance to their children, and to parents, care givers, health personnel, social workers to support the psychosocial well-being of children during quarantine, isolation, medical treatment, and hospital admission, to parents and caregivers on self-care.
Colombia

Colombia adopted the New Code of Children, Childhood, and Adolescence Law 1098 in November 2006, which ratified the universal consideration that family and children are subjects of rights and promulgated the principle of Co-Responsibility, the joint participation between State-Family-Civil Society. Among other regulations, it established that the social work professional must mandatorily operate in the Family Police Stations (created in 1989) and the judicial system (family, juvenile, promiscuous, sentence execution, and security measures courts), with profiles that emphasise social expertise and multidisciplinary work, under the name of psychosocial teams. This legislation has gradually transformed the vision of boys and girls by shifting the focus from healthcare to a comprehensive perspective in all processes to acknowledge them as subjects of rights and duties in society.

The Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), the coordinating arm of the National System of Family Welfare, established a "solidarity model" in 2007, which provides a view of the principle of Co-Responsibility from a systemic perspective, clarifying concepts, positions, and administrative relationships that the actors must assume and establish in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to them for the guarantee or restitution of children's rights. They are responsible for defining the administrative procedures, road maps, and measures for re-establishing rights for each type of violation. These range from family counselling, medical help, and rehabilitation to psychosocial support and even adoption, as a last resort.

Côte d'Ivoire

The Constitution and laws provide the framework for the implementation of community-level CP, but the role of village committees has not yet been institutionalised. The legal framework includes:

1. The Constitution of July 23, 2000, which mentions in its preamble and in Chapter I, the overall attachment of Côte d'Ivoire to the main human rights as well as to the fundamental freedoms;
2. Law No. 98-757 of December 23, 1998, on protection against harmful traditional practices of excision;
3. Law No. 64-375 of October 7, 1964, amended by Law No. 83-800 of August 2, 1983 on marriage;
4. Law No. 2010-272 of September 30, 2010 prohibiting trafficking and the worst forms of child labour;
5. Ministerial Order 0075/2009 prohibiting physical and humiliating punishment;
6. The National Social Protection Strategy (SNPS) that frames national efforts to build a comprehensive and effective social protection system, while prioritising measures and programmes that reduce the vulnerability of the poorest and most at risk groups; and
7. The Draft National Policy for the Protection of Children Against All Forms of Violence, Abuse, and Exploitation, which was developed with input from stakeholders through a series of consultations and was finalised in November 2012. A national child protection plan of action is currently being drafted.

India

India has a well-established system for community-based social workers in the health, nutrition, and childcare sectors but not for CP. The CP systems began evolving since 2000 and, notwithstanding a number of key legislation, policies, and programmes, is still a work in progress. Currently, Mission Vatsalya is a roadmap to achieve development and CP priorities aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It lays emphasis on child rights, advocacy, and awareness along with strengthening of the juvenile justice care and protection system with the motto to "leave no child behind". The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 provisions and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 form the basic framework for implementation of the Mission.

The role of social workers in CP came into focus essentially in the last two decades, beginning with the enactment of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act in 2000. Subsequent legal amendments to the Juvenile Justice laws and other laws for CP and framing of their rules helped in articulating the CP system for children in conflict with the law and children in need of care and protection.

The institutional structure with vertical and horizontal linkages has been articulated, many dimensions of the system still require clarity, including the role of the CLSWW. However, the mechanisms for dealing with children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with law are required to bring on board social workers, ensure appropriate orientation or training of the members (assuming it includes the principles and practice of social work), and call upon "support persons" for specialised functions (this is where the NGOs are coming in).

Mali

The Ministry of Women, Children, and Family created in 2015 a set of guidelines for the management of cases of violence against children in partnership with UNICEF and other actors of the CP cluster. This document mentions the community CP committees as co-actors of the identification of community cases. It suggests that formal social workers should be regularly present in the community but does not specify the resources at their disposal to do so. The Competency Development Framework (not available online and still at draft stage in 2020) mentions that a law is being drafted for the revision of the CP code and the existence of a national CP policy. Mali ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Uganda

The Ugandan Constitution creates an overarching legal framework to provide services to "protect children and vulnerable persons against any form of abuse, harassment or ill-treatment". Significant steps taken by the government to analyse and identify the composition and capacity of the social service workforce include: a systems analysis on the implementation of the Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children Policy by the MGLSD (2010); launching of a second five-year National Strategic Programme Plan of Interventions, which mandated regular reporting of case management, strengthened the information system by providing data on reach and coverage, and eventually led to the development of a national manual and training for case management (2011); a national mapping of the existing CP systems, which revealed that the social service workforce needed critical attention and that community-based PSWs were a critical part of service delivery, especially in rural communities, and led to concerted effort at strategic planning by the government (2013); publication of the first National Social Protection Policy Plan, which anchored the importance of having a comprehensive plan for effective social services (2015); the first National Symposium on Social Work, which identified the need for greater planning, including a legal mechanism to regulate the social service workforce (2018); and a functional review of the government-supported social service workforce to gain an in-depth understanding of the skills, standards, and capacity that national planning efforts needed to address (2019).

A National Framework for Strengthening the Social Service Workforce developed with facilitation by the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (2022) was accompanied by an Operational Framework—built around legislation, institutional capacity, services, coordination, evaluation and data, quality assurance, and financing—has also been developed, which, if approved and implemented, will provide a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to plan for the workforce at all levels.

As part of the development of the Operational Framework, all social service workforce job descriptions were reviewed and subsequently revised as needed. Supervision guidelines and service delivery standards were also developed. The process also involved an assessment of the human resource system to identify human resource requirements to carry out national plans. Collaboration of the government with UN agencies (led by UNICEF), development partners (notably USAID), academia, social work professional bodies, and practitioners underpinned these processes and contributed to alliances, increased trust and dialogue, and advocacy for stronger legislation and increased and more effective resource allocation.

PSWs were recruited on a large-scale in Uganda during the Strengthening Uganda's National Response for Implementation of Services for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (SUNRISE-OVC) project implemented between 2010 and 2015. The project, in partnership with MGLSD, had recruited, trained, and deployed 6,549 PSWs in 71% (80/112) of the districts by 2015, and this number was expected to rise to 9,808 by the end of the project. Like the Village Health Teams (VHTs) model implemented by the Ministry of Health,

trained PSWs were envisioned to be utilised by government, civil society, and community organisations in strengthening protection and social support for vulnerable people.

The Social Sector Investment Plan 2015/16–2019/207 recognised the important contribution and the need for development of PSWs, particularly in handling issues of CP at district, sub-county, and community levels. PSWs are also in great demand in delivering social protection services with vulnerable households in their communities. According to a recent assessment of the PSW cadre, PSWs are widely recognised as important and effective in the social development in Uganda.

Table 3 – Providers of Community-level Social Welfare Services

Providers of Community-level Social Welfare Services
Burkina Faso
The NGO/project that wishes to support the CCPE 1) helps raise awareness among the actors likely to be part of the CCPE; 2) organises a meeting to establish the CCPE; and 3) trains stakeholders on VAC, the CP system, and on identification, reporting, and referral techniques for the victims. The government has created the community protection committees but has no budget line associated to support them beyond an initial training. The NGOs are presented with a scaffolding for activity into which they can invest (the community committees), but as their project ends, the committee is left to their own devices again.
Colombia
The Colombian Government, in its documents and policies, focuses specifically on development of people in early childhood. There seems to be a good interaction between the government and the NGOs that are particularly active in the areas where there is an active conflict. As the capacities and political interest of the government to invest resources on prevention and response to VAC grow, the NGOs have the potential to partner further with the government to design common capacity building frameworks that prepare community volunteers for future institutionalisation and interaction with the formal social work services.
Côte d'Ivoire
The government has left the task to train and work through village committees to the NGOs, without a coordinated plan on what they should be trained for or how they should be employed.
India
The operations of Childline has been vested under the overarching umbrella of emergency services operated by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is also the nodal ministry for law enforcement. The NGOs may however be called up on by the statutory mechanisms for dealing with children in need of care and protection (Child Welfare Committees) and children in conflict with law (Juvenile Justice Boards) for social workers, ensure appropriate orientation or training of the members (assuming it includes the principles and practice of social work), and fulfil the requirement of "support persons" for specialised functions. Although there is a thrust on family-based care and de-institutionalisation in government policy, the role of frontline social workers is still not clear. Through a pilot project in three states of India, SC tried to delineate the role and competencies of the community-based workers within the ICPS framework. The learnings from the pilot project have been shared with the relevant states to explore the possibilities of replication. Simultaneously, the qualification pack developed for community-based workers is being shared with Management & Entrepreneurship and Professional Skills Council for approval and accreditation.
Mali
The government and NGOs operated mostly in an uncoordinated manner until 2019, when efforts to align their work started. Since then, Mali has developed a standard framework for the development of the competencies of CLSWW and a standard process for the identification and management of cases of VAC.

Table 4 – Eligibility Criteria for CLSWW

Eligibility Criteria by Country
Burkina Faso
The process of setting up the CCPE is participatory and is not conditioned by the existence of a social service in the community. However, this implementation must be organised and supported by the provincial or municipal social service responsible for the village or sector. The CCPE is organised according to the realities of the community and is made up of five (5) to ten (10) people on the basis of morality, commitment, and volunteerism.
Cambodia
Not available.
Colombia
Colombia has set precise requirements and eligibility criteria for community parents in their *Manual Operativo Modalidad Familiar*. These include: 1) be over 18 years old, 2) have resided in the sector where the FAMI Community Welfare Home operates at least for one (1) year, 3) minimum education: early childhood technician, or highest level of schooling that exists in the territory, 4) interest stated in writing with commitment to providing space for the work in their home; 5) written guarantee that every person in the household doesn't have a criminal record; 6) not having failed to comply with early childhood care services directives before; 7) in the case of ethnic groups, recognition and approval of the community for their traditional knowledge, command of the mother tongue, and knowledge of the culture and the territory; and 8) have a training certificate in good manufacturing practices and hygienic practices in food handling. There are no set criteria for ad hoc community volunteers, and every NGO working with them has their own eligibility processes.
Côte d'Ivoire
The only criteria currently observed in the selection of the CP committee is the indication (communicated by community authorities) that the community approves the committee members.
India
The social worker should be a graduate—preferably in BA in social work/sociology/social sciences from a recognised university, with weightage for work experience and has proficiency in computers. The outreach worker should have passed Class 12 examination from a recognised Board/Equivalent Board and have good communication skills, with weightage for work experience.
Mali
The choice of the members of the local CP committees is left to the local communities. The government, however, asks that these members are motivated to work on CP, have the time necessary, have lived in the community for at least ten years, and have no criminal records specifically related to cases of violence or abuse of children. These eligibility criteria are not formalised yet in government policies.

Myanmar
Qualification and experience: experience in community/voluntary work (ideally in CP); an active member of the community—leadership in the community; person trusted by children in his/her community; strong connection with the community; at a minimum, a basic level of reading and writing skills.
Tanzania
There are several criteria that are considered for someone to be elected as a coordinator: 1) the administration (Village Chief, Committee, Social Welfare Officer) of local villages receives the police record of the candidates; 2) the person should be a role model in the community; 3) the person should be above 21 years of age.
Uganda
Recruitment and engagement of all PSWs shall go through the CDO in each sub-county through a transparent public process, including: an announcement of a PSW position at community level, a formal evaluation based on a list of standardised criteria, an interview with final three applicants per position, and consultation with community leadership, and final selection made and announced by the CDO. These responsibilities, except the final selection, may be delegated to the MGLSD implementing partner authorised to support PSWs in the area. No organisation shall recruit or engage PSWs without first consulting with the local leadership and formal written approval issued by the CDO. Required qualifications of PSW: at least 18 years of age; completion of Ordinary Level of Education (Uganda certificate of education or equivalent required); the ability to relate to vulnerable populations, especially children; the ability to communicate well in oral and written form (fluent in English); and two years of experience working with individuals, families, or communities in providing social support services. Possession of minimum functional skills: ability to read and write English and local language; ability to transport self or with assistance; and ability to communicate and be understood. Experience: No previous experience is required for the basic PSW position. Completion of standardised PSW training and passing the post-test, resulting in the receipt of Letter of Appointment signed by the CDO, is required. Minimum Qualifications of Parish and Sub-County PSW Team Leaders: To be selected as Parish PSW team leader, the PSW shall have received Certificate of Good Standing for at least three years and be approved by the local council and CDO. To be selected as sub-county PSW Team Leader, the PSW shall have received Certificate of Good Standing for at least five years and be approved by the sub-county council and CDO.

Table 5 – Job Descriptions

Job descriptions by Country
Burkina Faso
• Identify and denounce cases of violence, neglect, and various abuses, including excision, child marriage, and sexual abuse of children in the community and direct them to the competent structures; • Promote the educational and socio-professional reintegration of children who are victims or at risk of violence; • Promote activities to promote children's rights at the community level; • Promote community participation in CP initiatives and the promotion of children's rights; • Facilitate the implementation of appropriate care activities for children at risk or victims of violence or various abuses; • Contribute to the prevention of cases of violation of children's rights within the community; • Contribute to the prevention of risky mobility of children; • Facilitate advocacy on specific actions relating to the protection and promotion of children's rights with a view to changing mentalities in relation to harmful traditional practices; and • Promote endogenous CP mechanisms.
Cambodia
Paraprofessional workers and volunteers: 1. Identify children and families at risk and refer to formal system; 2. Work with community CP mechanisms; 3. Link to services and monitor progress; and 4. Case management, home visits, direct services (counselling, psychosocial support, economic support, etc.) **Paraprofessional social workers**: 1. Manage and analyse client data within the jurisdiction of municipal, district, and Khan, including orphans, victim and vulnerable children, children in alternative care, children who commit crimes, drug addicts, victims of crime and human trafficking, migrants, poor families, elderly, homeless, mentally ill, people living with HIV, people with disability, pregnant women and children under two years of age, and disaster victims; 2. Manage client cases by following case management procedures using case management system or Primero system (if any); 3. Inspect the residential care institutions managed by the NGOs within the jurisdiction of municipalities, districts, and Khans; 4. Identify, select, assess, and make decisions to close or continue the case of children under the foster care in the best interests of the child, in collaboration with the Department of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation, the Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC), and relevant partner organisations;

5. Track cases of children receiving foster care services by foster parents, family care, relatives, formal living, children staying in foster care or children facing unnecessary separation from the family, and children in need of permanent case planning;
6. Participate in the prevention and response to VAC and other crisis/emergency situations in collaboration with local authorities and relevant NGOs;
7. Monitor clients who have undergone rehabilitation and post-integration to family and community;
8. Coordinate the development of veterans in the community and provide technical support to the Commune/Sangkat Veterans Association;
9. Coordinate and monitor community-based elderly care programmes and strengthen the capacity of Commune/Sangkat elderly associations; and
10. Facilitate the implementation of social assistance programmes.

Colombia

There is no specific job description for the many volunteers collaborating with the NGOs as CP community-based social workers. The 183-page long *Manual Operativo*_has a general description of the duties that community parents are supposed to carry out. For instance, community parents ensure a space where the Community Home Service for Family, Women, and Child Welfare (HCB FAMI) can conduct local sensitisation activities and trainings, including training of other community parents, monthly 90-minute encounters for psychosocial support of families, and more generally community activities for strengthening people's capacity to take care of young children.

Formal social workers' duties related to CP include a variety of tasks that have been analysed and reported in local efforts to conduct research on social work. These tasks include: 1) identification, diagnosis, and reception of children who have experienced violence; 2) intervention and support; 3) discharge; and 4) follow-up and post-discharge monitoring. Each of these steps is detailed and includes a series of sub-steps, such as, for instance: family interviews and documentary analysis, recording of cases, creation of relational maps, interviews with children and parents, ensuring connection of children with local support services, working with community leaders to prevent violence in the community; providing care and psychological support; and follow-up verification of respect of the measures defined by the competent authorities, to cite a few examples from a long list.

Côte d'Ivoire

There is no job description for community committees or formal social workers.

India

According to Mission Vatsalya, each DCPU shall have two social workers (at least one woman) who would be responsible for coordinating field level activities under the guidance and leadership of Protection Officer—Institutional Care or Legal-cum-Probation Officer and as assigned by the District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) and assist the Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU) in discharging their duties as and when required. They are assisted by outreach workers in the field level interventions.

Coordination: work effectively with government and non-government agencies in meeting the needs of the referred children, and coordinate field level activities within the remit of the ICSP;

Planning: vigilance towards any VAC.

However, there are no job descriptions for community outreach workers.
Mali
There are no job descriptions for CP committees or formal social workers. Community members are expected to liaise between children and the formal services but have no resources at their disposal, which represents a major obstacle to their effectiveness.
Myanmar
The Community Social Worker will be responsible for carrying out activities by linking and coordinating on a day-to-day basis with community members, those who are able to provide community support, and service providers to support vulnerable children through providing a basic response, identification of a child who could benefit from basic case management, carrying out a basic assessment, psychosocial support, mobilising community supports, making the appropriate timely, safe and child-friendly referrals, and closing the case when the child is safe and being protected. Responsibilities include: 1) creating a foundation to promote CP at the community level, 2) helping communities to prevent VAC, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, 3) helping communities to respond to children experiencing violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, 4) Identifying and responding to the needs of individual children experiencing violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, 5) professional development. The responsibilities have corresponding tasks and competencies.
Tanzania
Village level coordinators are established by the government through a national policy. The provision is for one per village.
Uganda
All PSWs shall: (i) identify children, families, and other vulnerable persons in the community who are at risk of, or already experiencing, child protection or social protection needs; (ii) provide support to professional social workers in child protection and social protection case management work (which includes all seven steps, including identification, assessment, enrolment, case planning, providing direct services [e.g., basic psychosocial support and counselling], making referrals, monitoring and follow-up, and case review/closure). This may include accompanying vulnerable children to services and alternative care placements as requested by the professional social worker in charge of the case; (iii) PSWs may, upon approval of professional case workers on a case-by-case basis, conduct the entire case management process, but they shall refer cases involving alternative care placement, statutory cases (e.g., child sexual abuse, children in conflict with the law), or very complex or difficult cases to relevant professionals and authorities; (iv) attend and present on relevant cases at the Parish Case Conference; (v) assist professional social workers in making alternative care decisions and participate in the "gatekeeping" process; (vi) work on reintegration cases in collaboration with the professional social worker and the community support mechanisms (may be through case management); (vii) Collaborate with local councils and community structures such as VHTs, paralegals, and others in carrying out case management and community; (viii) sensitisation, advocacy, and mobilisation; and (ix) attend required meetings and workshops. **Parish PSW Team Leaders shall:** (i) provide peer support and guidance to individual PSWs within their area of responsibility; (ii) compile and send required reports related to PSW activities within their coverage area to the sub-county PSW group leader; (iii) collaborate with their local council and other community groups to guide PSW case management work; (iv) support PSW in preparing for and presenting cases at the Parish Case Conference meetings; (iv) communicate the results of the Parish Case Conference meeting to the relevant PSW

and provide support in the implementation of the Case Conference decision; (v) facilitate monthly PSW meetings to share results from the previous parish conference, review cases to be presented at next case conference meetings (if any), and to provide other relevant information and guidance to improve PSW functions; and (vi) communicate and discuss general correspondences from the CDO or sub-county PSW group leader to PSWs in their coverage area.

Sub-county PSW Team Leader shall: (i) manage their own caseload (maximum of 10 cases, which is a reduction of earlier case load); (ii) provide peer support and guidance to Parish PSW group leaders under their responsibility; (iii) compile and send required reports related to PSW activities within their coverage area to the CDO; (iv) collaborate with local councils and other community groups to guide the work of PSWs; (v) present cases at the sub-county Case Conference meeting; (vi) communicate the results of the sub-county Case Conference meeting to the relevant parish group leader and provide support in the implementation of the Case Conference decision; (vii) communicate correspondence from the CDO to parish group leaders in their coverage area.

Table 6 – Roles And Functions of CLSWW

Role Descriptions by Country
Burkina Faso
The Community Child Protection Committee (CCPE) operates as a liaison between the formal CP services and the community, most often aiming at ensuring a timely identification and management of cases of violence. Their role also includes conducting prevention activities, but those are mostly depending on funding and the vision implemented by NGOs, since the government services that the CCPE liaises with are mostly focused on response. The CCPE is a relay of the provincial child protection network (RPE) or the communal child protection network (RCPE). As a result, the head of the unit participates in the general meetings of the RPEs or the RCPE. In general, the CCPE is responsible for: promoting activities for the protection and promotion of children's rights at the community level; promoting community participation in initiatives to protect children and promote children's rights; enhancing endogenous CP mechanisms. CCPE prevention responsibilities: to sensitise communities on the rights and protection of children; work with the community on the identification of situations that may favour VAC and the taking of corresponding preventive measures; contribute to the prevention of cases of violation of children's rights within the community; and contribute to the prevention of risky mobility of children. CCPE's support to response: to identify cases of violence, neglect, and miscellaneous abuse and sexual exploitation of children in the community; report to the competent authorities' cases of violence, neglect, and various abuses, in particular sexual abuse and exploitation of children in the community; and refer cases of violence, negligence, and miscellaneous abuse to the competent authorities, in particular sexual abuse and exploitation of children to the competent structures, take the necessary steps to curb VAC and, if necessary, refer cases to the competent authorities; mediate and sensitise families and groups in the event of violation of children's rights, particularly with regard to social norms; promote the school and socio-professional reintegration of child victims or children at risk of violence; facilitate the carrying out of appropriate care activities for children at risk of or victims of violence or various abuses.
Cambodia
Paraprofessional social workers are expected to - manage and analyse client data within the jurisdiction of municipal, district, and Khan, including orphans, victim and vulnerable children, children in alternative care, children who commit crimes, drug addicts, victims of human trafficking, migrants, poor families, elderly, homeless, mentally ill, people living with HIV, people with disability, poor, pregnant women and children under two years of age, poor families, and disaster victims; - manage client cases by following case management procedures using case management system or Primero system (if any); - inspection of NGOs RCI within the jurisdiction of municipalities, districts, and Khans; - identify, select, assess, and make decisions to close or continue the case of children under the foster care in the best interests of the child, in collaboration with the Department of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation and the CCWC and relevant partner organisations; - track cases of children receiving foster care services by foster parents, family care, relatives, formal living, children staying in foster care or children facing unnecessary separation from the family, and children in need of permanent case planning;

- participate in the prevention and response to VAC and other crisis or emergency situations in collaboration with local authorities and relevant NGOs;
- monitor clients who have undergone rehabilitation and post-integration to family and community;
- coordinate the development of veterans in the community and provide technical support to the Commune/Sangkat Veterans Association;
- coordinate and monitor community-based elderly care programmes and strengthen the capacity of Commune/Sangkat elderly associations; and
- facilitate social assistance programmes.

Colombia

The high administrative and political focus on decentralisation of the Colombian Government has opened the opportunity for a contextualisation of the roles of community parents and other unpaid volunteers. Community parents are generally seen as pedagogical agents, who monitor the "development of girls and boys, based on the history of the community and territories, and in accordance with the population, economic, social and cultural characteristics of their daily lives". As such, besides what was mentioned earlier on the tasks that community parents are called to cover, there are many roles and functions that community volunteers cover on a case-to-case basis (ranging from dealing with children in armed conflict, sexual violence and abuse, and other CP issues as they arise).

More information is available on the role that formal social workers have in dealing with reports of sexual abuse of children. The social workers examine the family and social context of the alleged victim and based on the findings and the evidence of alleged sexual abuse, they may suggest the placement of the child in an institutional environment (ICBF—substitute home or institution) or family (close extended family where no risk is evident). They are the professionals trained to carry out the comprehensive care process and to promote the rights of children. They also liaise with other members of the health team to, together, propose the most appropriate comprehensive treatment alternatives to each case.

Côte d'Ivoire

There is no description of roles for village committees or formal social workers. The latter learn their expectations as they go through their formal education.

India

Village Level Child Protection Committees (VCPC) were introduced in the ICPS as a non-formal structure of village duty bearers and community members who could be the link between families, communities, and the CP system. Their role includes awareness and dialogue for behaviour change, keeping watch on the situation of children in the community, tracking services for children in the community, follow-up of the cases, and linking children to the system.

Mali

The national framework for management of cases of violence mentions that village committees participate in the identification of cases of violence. These village committees are the only real engine for such identification. Within the committees, they have different roles (from treasury, to coordination, to prevention, sensitisation, and case management, to mention a few). However, there is no official document detailing their roles and responsibilities, but that is something on which the government of Mali is working. Formal social workers also

lack clear role descriptions. The national framework mentioned above, however, specifies (p.28) that these social workers are responsible for: identifying cases of violence; conducting rapid assessment of the situation; monitoring the effective implementation of the management of the case; supporting the child and their family through advice, psychosocial support, and regular visits; participating in meetings related to the case management with other actors in the formal system; managing the case in accordance with national procedures; and keeping the case file up to date.

Myanmar

Responsibilities include: 1) creating a foundation to promote CP at the community level, 2) helping communities to prevent VAC, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, 3) helping communities to respond to children experiencing violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, 4) identifying and responding to the needs of individual children experiencing violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, and 5) professional development. The responsibilities have corresponding tasks and competencies.

Table 7 – Competencies

Competencies by Country
Burkina Faso
The CCPE liaises between the formal CP services and the community, often aiming at ensuring a timely identification and management of cases of violence. Their role includes also conducting prevention activities, but those are mostly depending on funding and the vision implemented by NGOs, since the government services that the CCPE liaises with are mostly focused on response. Their competencies are not clearly defined in the job description, as the selection is largely left in the hands of the traditional community selection processes and mostly rely on the members' standing within the community as role models for child welfare. The rapidly changing scenario of the humanitarian situation, however, presents very different challenges. The CLSWWs act upon violence but not, as an example, the issue of child soldiers and the challenges with their reintegration. The CCPE members need stronger capacity to understand and respond to such issues. Key informants also suggested that CCPE members could be helped by building greater capacity to recognise children who are victims of violence and reach out to the formal systems by respecting the privacy of all parties involved. Moreover, CCPE members need greater support to develop both effective psychological first aid skills (since they are the first point of contact for children who experience violence) as well as stronger community sensibilisation competencies. Lastly, there is an urgent need to develop language skills (that represent serious barriers between the children and the CLSWWs) as well as writing skills (as, often, CLSWWs cannot fill the form when they visit the formal services).
Cambodia
The Guidelines on Basic Competencies for Social Workforce include three major competencies: 1) Values and Ethics, 2) Knowledge, and 3) Skills, which have been developed in line with global and regional context to respond to the practical needs of Cambodia's social context. The CLSWW should be able to analyse and recognise the needs and issues to identify and help solve problems at the individual, family, local community, and societal levels based on a strong commitment to these values, ethics, loyalty, and responsibilities. All social service providers should adhere to professional values and ethics during their work (viz. dignity and the right to privacy; individualisation; non-discrimination; cultural humility; service; social justice; client participation; empowerment; competence; integrity and accountability; and commitment and dedication). They should understand and apply the main theories, policies, legal frameworks, and international conventions as the tool for performing their work: ecosystem model theory, theories of poverty, human development theory, theories of attachment and trauma, empowerment theory, social support theory, theories of human rights and child rights, strengths perspective theory; theories of violence, and addiction theory, the basic cross-cutting knowledge of practice models including case management, basic counselling, group work model (basic) , crisis management, social work in conflict areas and/or humanitarian settings, and community organisation as well as key international conventions, law, legal frameworks and national policies related to social welfare sector. Relevant national laws and legal standards viz., laws on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, intercountry adoption, juvenile justice, suppression of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, and labour, and *Prakas* on procedures to implement the policy on alternative care for children, the Penal Criminal Code, explanatory notes on the domestic adoption and the Civil Code, minimum standards on alternative care for children, guidelines on forms and procedures for identification of victims of human trafficking for appropriate service provision, and the policy and minimum standards for protection of the rights of victims of human trafficking, and relevant national policies, including the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals Framework (2016–2030), the National Policy on Alternative Care of Children, and the National Social Protection Policy. They should be able to apply these values and knowledge through the

following skill competencies: engagement, assessment, service planning, implementation and follow-up, documentation and monitoring, communication, interpersonal and analytical skills, networking and advocacy, and self-reflection and self-care.

Colombia

The government "*convocatorias*" (announcements) for the opening of positions of community parents always refer to specific competencies required. The prospective community parents are selected based on these competencies and trained further. Unpaid ad hoc community volunteers working with NGOs or formal systems require having competencies that vary in accordance with the specific contextual role that they are to perform. The selection of Formal Social Work Professionals—who are responsible to promote children's rights through family monitoring, orientation, intervention, and accompaniment of the family and support—is mostly focused on a set of formal criteria (a degree awarded by a university or higher education institution legally recognised in Colombia, a professional card and have at least one year of certified professional experience in programmes, projects, or comprehensive protection services). Despite their competencies not being clearly defined, by looking at their roles, we understand that they need to have organisational capacity, knowledge of children's rights framework and policies, understanding of the CP context, and pedagogical and psychosocial support skills.

There is a need to strengthen the capacity of the CLSWWs to be able to act on the challenges presented by the ongoing armed conflict. CLSWWs should have a greater understanding and updated knowledge of the existing policies and political strategies in the government and that CLSWWs' work would improve if they had greater focus in their work on human rights-based approaches to and strategies for citizen participation. And finally, CLSWWs could benefit from a deeper capacity to envision and implement strategies to promote and protect children's rights in their localities.

Côte d'Ivoire

There is no clear definition of competencies for village committees or formal social workers. Informants reported an urgent need to implement timely training from the inception of the committee. Committee members need to know their mission, roles, and responsibilities. At the moment, they struggle to identify cases of violence and abuse and would need greater help with that. They need greater capacity to offer and implement psychological first aid.

India

Community CP workers are expected to support the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) representatives and enable them to manage CP cases effectively in their communities. They should be able to work with communities in gender sensitive ways to protect children and families through interaction with children, young people, and their families; child participation and gender integration while promoting CP; nurture the village CP committees in the panchayat to address CP issues by following the government guidelines for community-level bodies/structures responsible for CP; engage and work with families according to positive cultural norms and in adherence with SC's "Child Safeguarding Policy"; and make decisions related to case referral and escalation: Inform the DCPU/Block of any identified CP risk/s that require immediate attention or intervention by the DCPO or statutory bodies, support the implementation of the action plan devised as appropriate under the aegis of the DCPU, and follow the guidance and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) provided to address CP violations in the community; collaborate and coordinate with various stakeholders; follow government guidelines; contribute to the implementation of the project's monitoring and evaluation plan; and be a role model in the community by adhering to values, ethics, and gender sensitivity in personal and professional conduct.

Mali

The national competency framework demands the following competencies of community actors.

Knowledge of 1) all legal instruments, main CP issues, categories of VAC, main risks affecting children in emergency, security procedures of the local NGO, and mechanisms for coordinating protection interventions in emergency situations; 2) how crisis/violent situations affect children according to their age, gender, and diversity; 3) psychosocial first aid; 4) specialised services and supports available in their work environment; 5) key actors in the local CP system; 6) referral procedures for children with specific needs (ECL, ES-NA, EAFGA, refugees, GBV, etc.); 7) principles of confidentiality related to SEO; 8) the recourse mechanisms for violations of children's rights and how to alert them; and 9) the rules governing child testimony and the procedures that must be followed.

Know-how (Aptitude): 1) Know how to use a rights-based approach to children's rights; 2) know how to determine the best interests of the child; 3) know how to determine the rights specifically at risk for girls and boys; 4) act in accordance with the normative and legal framework; 5) knowing how to reconcile social norms and legal norms when this does not harm the best interests of the child; 6) to be able to understand the risks and vulnerabilities of girls and boys for each CP issue; 7) be able to understand the transversalities between CP issues with attention to gender and diversity; 8) be able to identify the signs of a child victim of violence in its different forms (physical, sexual, psychological, neglect); 9) apply safety rules in all its interventions for itself, its collaborators, and the beneficiaries; 10) know how to interact within the cluster; 11) know how to bring comfort and security to victims in a way that is adapted to gender and diversity; 12) adapt their intervention/interaction with the child to the age, gender, diversity, and level of maturity; 13) know how to recognise and detect the signs of suffering, fear, stress, or anxiety in children according to their age; 14) adapt what we do to take into account the culture, gender, and diversity of the person; 15) know how to connect with available support services; 16) have the ability to respect the safety, dignity, and rights of victims/survivors; 17) have the ability to manage the stress, anxiety, and fear of the child according to their age; 18) be able to identify cases that require specialised professional care with particular attention to gender and diversity; 19) be able to refer cases to specialised support services; 20) understand the roles and responsibilities of each actor in the environment; 21) know how to use referencing mechanisms and pathways; 22) know how to give information on existing services adapted to their needs to children/families; 23) be able to explain the reason for the referral to children/families; 24) act in accordance with the national normative and legal framework; and 25) respect the rules of confidentiality when reporting.

Know-how (Attitude): 1) Sensitivity to the situation of children and to diversity and gender, objectivity, and integrity; 2) rigour, integrity, and a sense of collaboration; 3) benevolence, empathy, patience, observation, and the ability to listen; 4) professional conscience and rigour; 5) sense of collaboration; 6) negotiation, diplomacy, sense of collaboration, networking ability, teamwork; and 7) discernment, integrity; and reactivity.

These competencies have been fleshed out in the national Competency Development Framework. The government has further developed a roadmap to strengthen the capacities of the CP framework, but the process slowed down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Myanmar

Knowledge and skills: Demonstrate an awareness of child rights and CP issues, proficiency in local language (both oral and writing), ability to communicate effectively with empathetic understanding with children, young people, and their families, strong problem-solving skills when working in a challenging environment, and ability to effectively manage own time to meet deadlines and priorities.

Behaviours: Commitment to CP, ability to work with communities, sensitivity to confidentiality in working with children and families, and commitment to child safeguarding, builds and maintains effective relationships with community members and supervisors, ability and willingness to be sensitive to

cultural/religious/ethnic/special needs of children, young people, and adults and gender needs, and be a role model for others within own community, leading by example in aspects related to CP, interest in professional development, willingness to work flexible hours.

Tanzania

The key competencies for CLSWW include the following:

Knowledge: the Child Act; conceptual understanding of child protection (what is it and what it includes); basic understanding of case management to allow them to explain the legal process/court proceedings and the evidence presented to the victims' families.

Skills: Promotion of child participation and psychosocial support (there are not many people who are able to provide this service to the survivors).

The Tanzania PSW training manual and curriculum under the HIV/AIDS Twinning Centre Programme sought to introduce them to the basic concepts, processes, and helping skills that underlie all interventions with children and families, thus providing a foundation for effective intervention with this population. The PSW programme seeks to give community-based workers a basic knowledge of social work practice, human behaviour, and development in the social environment, especially focusing on vulnerable children and families; and HIV disease, including prevention, counselling, and testing, treatment access and issues, and related familial, social, and community advocacy.

Uganda

Minimum Competencies of PSWs: PSWs should possess the minimum competencies (PSW Competence Framework) required for their work with vulnerable people; namely, the applicable values, knowledge, and skills for working with those who are at a disadvantage and have experienced poverty, discrimination, injustice, physical or mental abuse, severe trauma, or other types of hardships and challenges.

Code of Ethics: PSWs should be able to conduct their actions in accordance with the set values and ethical standards. The code of ethics for PSWs shall be developed by the National Association of Social Workers based on the existing code of conduct for professional social workers.

Table 8 – Capacity Development

Capacity Development by Country
Burkina Faso
The CCPE members receive basic training that is largely insufficient to support and advise children and their families. This training focuses on: who to refer to, the legal framework for reporting, referencing structures, referral procedures, and reference tools. These committee members would benefit from more training on VAC, children's rights, case management, and, above all others, psychosocial support. The government (in partnership with several organisations, including SC International) produced a facilitator manual for the training of CCPE members in 2020. This training includes: 1) the needs and rights of children; 2) an overview of key CP issues; 3) CP mechanisms; 4) identification of and support for vulnerable children; 5) CP in humanitarian situations; 6) the position, roles and responsibilities, and ethical standards of the CCPE. Protection committee: Supervision is by CP networks. These networks supervise multiple villages. The coordinator of this network is often a judge, a police officer, or a social worker. They need to check the fact that the committee exists, how they are working, and what issues they are working with. When the NGOs have helped strengthen the capacities of community-based actors, they also put in place systems to monitor the work of the community-based actors. They will look at the service staff, the protection committees, accountability committees, and the village chief, trying to look at how the project implemented by the NGO is addressing the right issues for the village, ensuring that the local community-based workers are following the rules, etc. So, to summarise, supervision is done by: local NGOs, CP networks, and the state directly.
Cambodia
Paraprofessional social workers are trained to perform certain functions but do not require certification or licensing from a public professional body in the same way as professional social workers, who require a specialised degree. They are trained by the MoSVY and the Ministry of Interior to perform the functions set forth in Annexes 1 and 3 (d) of Sub- Decree No. 182 183 184 and Article 6 of Sub-Decree No. 34 effectively, efficiently, and with accountability.
Colombia
Community parents receive formal training at the beginning of the work that lasts approximately 12 hours. Their training is carried out by the ICBF in partnership with the zonal centres and other local partners. The content of their training is not standardised and responds to the contextual needs of the community parents and the children they are taking care of (due to reasons such as armed conflict, migration, and sexual violence). The training topic varies according to local internal decisions. These community parents and volunteers require greater training on 1) social policy issues affecting their work; 2) CP systems and mechanisms; 3) strategies for citizen participation; and 4) children's rights and protection mechanisms. Formal social workers are required to possess government approved university education. However, we could not find information on any in-job training that they undergo.
Côte d'Ivoire
A major problem in the capacity strengthening of social workers is these workers do not depend on a single ministry. They are linked to the ministry of family and children, solidarity and fight against poverty, etc. Each of these ministries has their own plan of action but lack a coordinated training and capacity strengthening

plan. It is rare for the ministries to organise concerted training sessions for the community committees, not least because of the lack of resources at their disposal. The NGOs train them when they have specific projects that work with them. Formal social workers are trained as they go through the INFS (National Institute for the Training of Social Workers), a higher education institute offering BAs and MAs in social work.

For the community committees, a basic training on violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation is needed. They need a basic understanding of children's rights and how to manage cases of VAC. They also need to be supported with revenue generating activities that can help them raise the resources to assist children who need to access the formal services. Finally, they need a system of accreditation to formalise their existence. Formal social workers need a convergent training and support plan developed by the government and implemented in partnership with the NGOs working in the country. This plan should also include a budget line to help them carry out their work.

India

The central and state governments have institutions that provide training to community-based social workers and have trained CP workforce. At the national level, the NIPCCD organises several programmes for capacity building of the CP functionaries. NIPCCD and the State Child Protection Society collaborate with NGOs & INGOs to impart these programmes. SC, UNICEF, Plan International, and many other organizations are the technical resource agencies for NIPCCD at the national, regional, and state levels. SC implemented competency-based training and mentoring for the 5 positions in the DCPU in three states.

Mali

The Competency Development Framework developed by the government includes a series of actions to be implemented in partnership with national and international NGOs. The government is developing a training system where community members are trained by the state at the beginning of the work and by NGOs later. As of now, there is no standard training procedure developed by the government, as the content of the training depends on the specific theme of interest for the area where the committee is located. Recently, there has been a three-day training on case management and psychological first aid. However, there are basic themes that are likely to be part of the training provided to local CP committee members. This training includes information on: 1) Who is a child; 2) What is CP; 3) What are children's rights, roles, and responsibilities; and 4) What are the roles and responsibilities of a CP committee. At a later stage, they might be trained on case management and emotional support. While the government has trained trainers of trainers at the national level and in the Bamako region, they plan to conduct regional training in the other regions, and eventually move to the local services and community committees which need training on anything that might be helpful to them to conduct CP work. They also need to be formalised within the government system and their role needs to be acknowledged and accredited.

Myanmar

The capacity building model for Community Social Worker (CSW) takes a phased approach. The focus of Phase 1 on working with communities and community facilitation (five days) is on their responsibilities in facilitating communities to prevent and respond to VAC, abuse, exploitation, and neglect. It seeks to help CSWs understand their role and responsibility within the community; how they can help communities to map and understand key protective community resources and protection issues and how communities might address protection issues. Phase 2 covers Four Steps of Case Management (five days—two months after Phase 1) and seeks to help the CSWs identify and respond to children facing protection concerns, including simplified case management steps—Step 1: Identification and assessment of level of risk; Step 2: Planning services and support; Step 3: Implementation; and Step 4: Review and Case Closure. Phase 3 on Developing

their Self within the Scheme (three to five days) will introduce them to the scheme, different tools and the process of professional development, and providing evidence of their competencies to their supervisors.

Tanzania

In 2006, Tanzania had only one accredited school of social work that offered social work education. There are now 12 schools of social work, which utilise standardised and accredited social work curricula and other standardised tools, including field practicum guide, and offer multiple degree programmes from the certificate level all the way to the PhD level. A major contributor to this development was the HIV/AIDS Twinning Centre Programme of the American International Health Alliance (AIHA), which supported social work education, including the PSW training programme. With the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) support and close collaboration with the Tanzania Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children; the Institute of Social Work (ISW); and technical resource partners at Jane Addams College of Social Work (JACSW) and the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Centre (MATEC) of the University of Illinois, Chicago, it undertook the development of a national PSW curriculum with enhanced HIV/AIDS competencies.

As a result, Tanzania is considered to have the most comprehensive PSW training programme, and other PSW countries have adapted and modified Tanzania's structure to their own specific context. The Tanzanian model trains PSWs as well as PSW supervisors, thereby allowing for PSW refresher training as well as supervision during PSWs volunteer tenure. Furthermore, having the oldest of the three PSW programmes, Tanzania has trained the highest number of PSWs and supervisors and has had the broadest geographic reach. The PSWs are trained and deployed across the country to deliver psychosocial services at the community level.

The Institute of Social Work (IST) of Tanzania assumed full ownership of the PSW Training Programme in 2016 and collaborates directly with other implementing partners to train PSWs throughout the country. The Department of Social Work of the IST offers training programmes in Kijitonyama, Dar es Salaam, and Kisangara campuses, which include Basic Technician Certificate in Social Work (NTA Level 4), Technician Certificate in Social Work (NTA Level 5), Ordinary Diploma in Social Work (NTA Level 6), Basic Technician Certificate in Youth and Children (NTA level 4), Higher Diploma in Social Work (NTA Level 7) and Bachelor Degree in Social Work (NTA level 8), and Master Degree in Social Work (NTA Level 9). The Basic Technician Certificate in Social Work is a starting level of the technician certificate training programme for learners intending to progress further to diploma qualification. The programme has been designed to provide fundamental social work skills and knowledge. Upon successful completion of this training level, the learners will be capable of providing basic social welfare services in different settings.

The University in Zanzibar offers diploma and degree programmes for social work, and the students undertake internships with various organisations (e.g., SC, Plan, Pathfinder), which work closely with the Department of Social Welfare. SC often involves Social Welfare Officers of the districts where it works in its programmes. The NGOs invest quite a lot in capacity building, including the training of social workers on psychosocial support, case management, CPIMS, parenting skills, and referral systems. In Zanzibar, capacity building is done more by the NGOs than the government.

Uganda

According to PSW Engagement Guidelines, once selected, all PSWs must undergo the standardised pre-service training and pass the post-test by a minimum score of 70% prior to taking on PSW responsibilities. The one-month pre-service training covers topics such as organization & leadership, communication, ability to identify and screen cases, documentation, coordinating with other actors, supporting communities in identifying common goals and prioritize to take action in improving the wellbeing of children in their communities, and playing their roles as PSWs based on the acquired knowledge and skills. The post-test shall

be administered by a training institution certified by the MGLSD and the applicant identified only by the applicant's number for purposes of scoring. Implementing Partners (only if certified) may conduct the pre-service training following the standardised curriculum, but the scoring of the post-tests shall be done by a double-blind process by a panel of experts following the same procedure for all PSW applicants. Upon completion of the pre-service training and the passage of the post-test, a Letter of Appointment as PSW signed by the CDO shall be issued to each PSW. This document shall be the primary evidence for the initial status of good standing for the PSW. MGLSD implementing partners authorised to support PSWs in the area are solely responsible to provide training (if applicable) beyond the standardised pre-service PSW training specifically pertinent to the work of their organisations. A current list of approved PSWs shall be kept by the secretary of the Local Council and made available to the community, IPs, and CDO.

The MGLSD has in the past implemented short-term (in-service) training courses for the social service workforce, including, for example, courses in CP, case management, and justice and the law. Efforts have also been made to orient staff to recent changes in the legal framework. A review found that at least 43% of the sampled social service workforce had received some form of in-service training, with the Probation, Social and Welfare Officers 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%).[6]

[6] Gideon K. Bulwani and Janestic M. Twikirize. Functional Review of the Government Social Service Workforce in Relation to Child Protection. Final Report. April 2019.

ANNEX 2 – LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

Burkina Faso	Adama Rouamba	Coordonnateur chargé de la gestion de cas et du CPIMS+, Save the Children
Cambodia	Leang Lo	Head of Child Protection, Family Care First, Save the Children
	Phanna Chhim	Technical Specialist, Plan International
	Sophea Phok	Child Protection Officer, UNICEF
Colombia	Lyda P. Guarin Martinez	Senior Regional Child Protection Adviser, Save the Children, Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office
	Ivon Parra	Proteccion Technical Adviser, Save the Children
Côte d'Ivoire	Aimé Djene	Conseiller Technique en protection de l'enfant, Save the Children
India	Madhumita Purkayastha	Manager, Child Protection Systems, Bal Raksha Bharat (Save the Children – India)
Mali	Lassine Daou	Coordinateur Gestion de Cas Protection de l'Enfance, Save the Children
	René Sanougou	Co-Lead Sous-Cluster Protection de l'Enfance, Direction nationale de la promotion de l'enfant et de la famille
Myanmar	Saw Thiha Aung	Child Protection Technical Advisor, Save the Children
Tanzania	Frida Chilimo	Child Protection Officer, Save the Children
	Amira Salum	Child Protection Officer, Save the Children
Uganda	Kevin Mubuke	Head of Child Protection and Child Rights, Save the Children
Global experts	Hugh Salmon	Director, Global Social Service Workforce Alliance
	Lourdes Carrasco Colom	Case Management Global Advisor, Terres des hommes

Save the Children