

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE STRENGTHENING IN CARE REFORM

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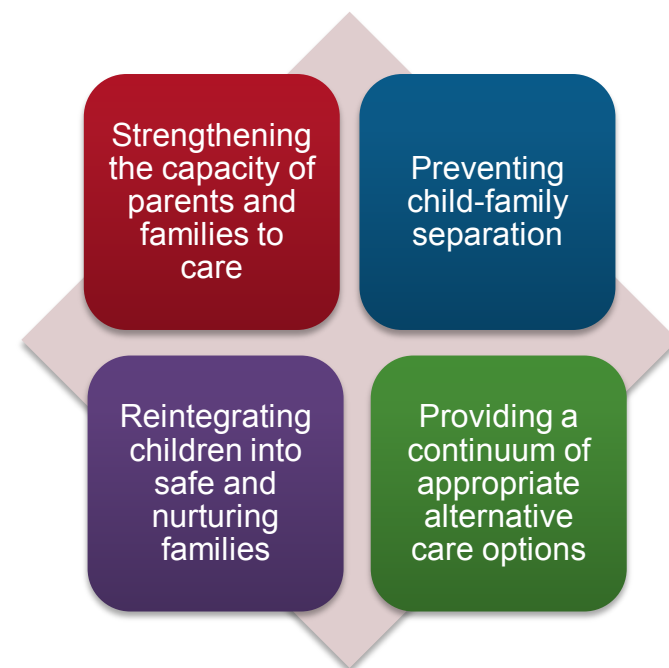


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CONTEXT

- Protecting children without family care
- Children in alternative care
- Children at-risk of being without parental care
- Central role of family



Strong, aligned, competent social service workforce is critical to care reforms at all levels!



UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

- A variety of workers—paid and unpaid, governmental and nongovernmental—that contribute to the care, support, promotion of rights, and empowerment of vulnerable populations served by the social service system.
- Present at all levels of society
- Dynamic and frequently context-specific.



SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE IN CHILD PROTECTION

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

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

FRAMEWORK FOR STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

Planning the Workforce

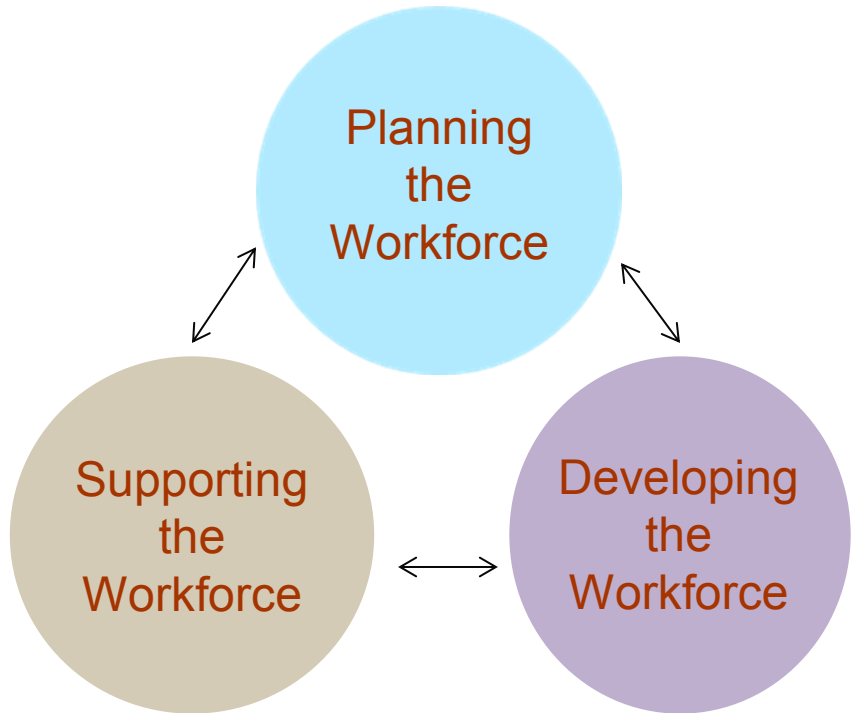
- Data & data collection methods
- Roles of the government and nongovernment workforce
- Legislative framework

Developing the Workforce

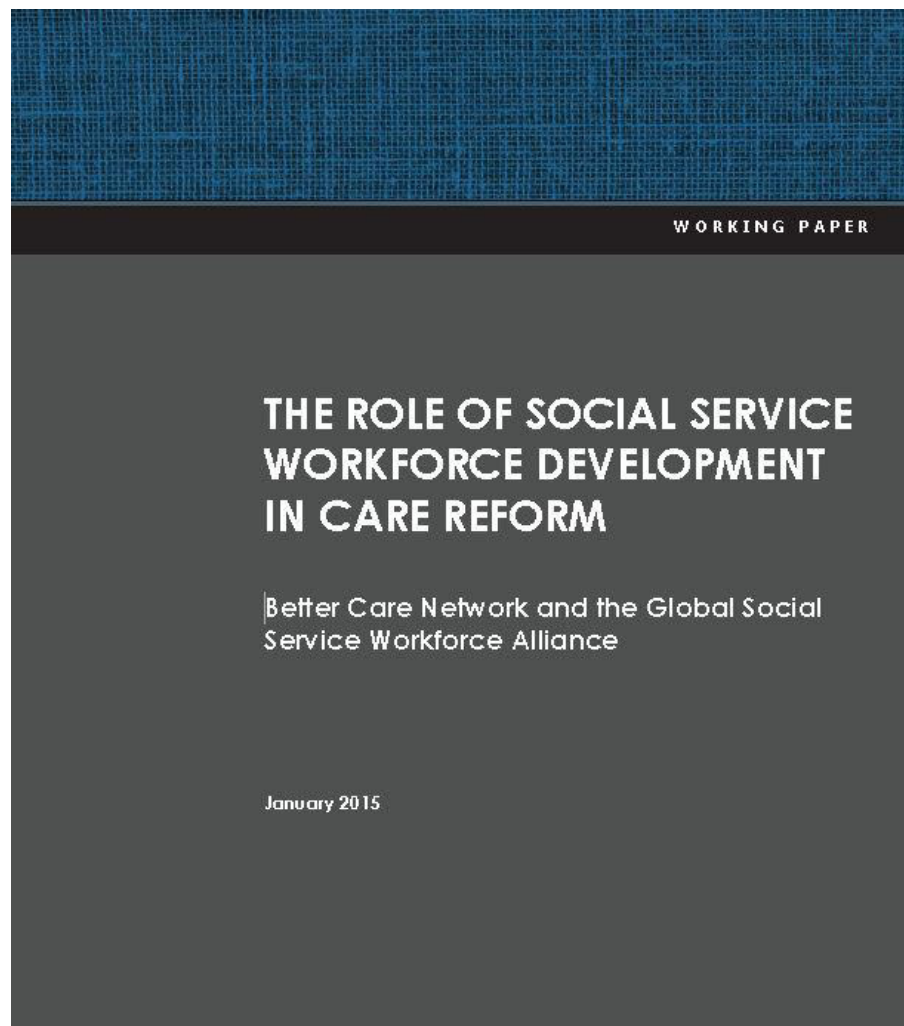
- Education and training programs

Supporting the Workforce

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



WORKING PAPER





**Better
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Vision

A world where a **well-planned, well-trained and well-supported social service workforce** effectively delivers promising practices that improve the lives of vulnerable populations.

Mission

To promote the **knowledge and evidence, resources and tools, and political will and action** needed to address key social service workforce challenges, especially within low to middle income countries.

BCN works by fostering **collaboration, research and information sharing** on family strengthening and alternative care, and **advocating** for changes to national and global policies to improve children's care situations.

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STRUCTURE OF THE CASE STUDIES

- Overview of reform context
 - Policy framework
 - Stakeholders
- Strengthening social service practices
- Developing, resourcing and supporting the workforce in care reform



IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Changing paradigms around care and protection requires a multipronged approach to workforce strengthening:

- Engaging a diverse set of actors in the change process
- Reforming policy and building an evidence base
- Developing and strengthening strategies and approaches in practice
- Planning for, developing, and supporting the workforce
- Shifting human and financial resources

ENGAGING A DIVERSE SET OF ACTORS

- Important to have a range of cadres, skills, professional levels for continuum of family support services & alternative care – No single cadre can manage the work
- Collaboration & partnership **across sectors / levels** with meaningful involvement = common visions, strategies, interventions (e.g. through Working groups)

ENGAGING A DIVERSE SET OF ACTORS

- **Alliances / networks** build awareness & help change mindsets.
- **Partnerships** - important link in identifying, training, and preparing the social service workforce
 - Universities, vocational, technical schools
 - Policy-makers & practitioners
- Critical role of community mechanisms (even informal) in child protection - flexible and contextual
- Faith community / faith-based organizations key actors in protection and care of children and in workforce development

REFORMING POLICY & DEVELOPING EVIDENCE BASE FOR REFORM & WORKFORCE

- Establishing national coordination mechanisms for policy and workforce strategies.
 - Assess, plan for, and build the workforce
 - Link with broader social service reform
- Incorporation of workforce component into policies and standards.
 - Parameters, criteria for professionalization, linkages, referral points
- Supporting research / assessment to facilitate reform - **involve workforce in research**
- Building contextually relevant evidence base
 - Pilot initiatives of nongovernment partners

DEVELOPING & STRENGTHENING STRATEGIES IN PRACTICE

- Need to pilot innovative care approaches and practice models for training e.g. family support model
- **Interlinking** care reform with social welfare reforms helps to build a stronger overall social service system that protects children and **helps workers to do their jobs more holistically.**
- Engaging the **participation of caregivers and children** in care reform and development of the social service workforce is crucially important
- Provides new practice perspectives to workers.

PLANNING, DEVELOPING & SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE

Planning

- Integrate workforce planning with overall care reform.
 - Establishing care reform working groups or coalitions of workforce development stakeholders.
- Increase awareness about the role and value of the workforce through advocacy .
- Developing a workforce-supportive legal or regulatory framework – define roles and mandates, accountability & professionalization (e.g. thru: certification)
- Understanding the **current** workforce helps with future **planning projections**

PLANNING, DEVELOPING & SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE

Developing

- Training / technical assistance programs with **pre-service** and **in-service** modules
- **Curricula development** through consensus process that engages - national government, academics, NGO or public practitioners
- Linkages between national and international universities to build capacity of academic partners esp. incorporate practice modules with theory-based learning
- Helping to define competencies, standardize curricula, and promote certification of professional cadres

RETRAINING / REDEPLOYMENT OF RESIDENTIAL CARE WORKERS

- Requires transformation of knowledge, skills & roles
- Engaging residential institution workers in change management
- Involving care workers in the reform process through participatory research / engagement in developing models
- Training and supporting care workers to implement family strengthening and prevention

SUPPORT STRATEGIES

- Developing professional associations gives the social service workforce a platform for recognition, promotion, advocacy, and knowledge exchange.
- Supervision mechanisms
 - case-by-case support for social workers
 - lowers isolation, one-to-one training, problem-solving on difficult cases
- Peer-to-peer support and platforms for sharing
 - Builds capacity
 - Reduces isolation and burnout
 - Increases peer-to-peer networking, case review meetings, and using technology to connect workers

SHIFTING HUMAN & FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN CARE REFORM

- Advocating for the **redirection or allocation** of financial resources for care reform and family-based services - role of working groups & alliances.
- Important role of donors / NGOs in supporting care reform through resource provision and **human resources development**.
 - Pilot programmes
 - Training and capacity building
 - Technical assistance through long term secondments



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