

ZAMBIA NATIONAL CONSULTATION
ACCELERATING THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CARE REFORM
PROCESS

IN-COUNTRY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SOCIAL
SERVICE WORKFORCE

PRESENTED BY:

BENSON CHISANGA, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

RADISSON BLU HOTEL, LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

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1. BACKGROUND

- Paper provides basic information on opportunities for the training of social service workforce in Zambia - focusing on levels of training; challenges; and future prospects.
- Social service workforce include professionals and para-professional workers that provide varied preventive/curative social protection services to vulnerable individuals, groups and communities including children; economically disadvantaged families; elderly; physically challenged persons; and victims of violence, abuse, exploitation, and ill-health (HIV/AIDS), etc.
- Social service workforce usually possess essential knowledge and skills in case management relating to identification of vulnerable populations; assessment of presenting problems and service needs; service design; resource mobilization; service delivery; policy and service advocacy; and assessment of outcomes for clients, among others.
- Most of the problems of concern; and essential knowledge/skill base of social service workforce are closely related to the social work profession = Much of the training of social service workforce in Zambia is provided in the context of professional social work education.
- Professional social work training services in Zambia were introduced by the British Colonial Administration in 1940s with the establishment of the Oppenheimer College of Social Services in Lusaka, offering a 3-year professional diploma in social work.

2. LEVELS OF TRAINING

- **Professional Training** in social work is provided by public and private Universities including The University of Zambia; and Mulungushi University; offering undergraduate and graduate level programs (BSW & MSW). The curricula include, among others, specialties/courses on social work practice with children and families; social work and law; social protection policies and services; human service management; community socioeconomic development; and research.
- **Para-professional Training** in social work is provided by tertiary level training institutions including Community Development

Colleges administered by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare; TEVETA-certified colleges including the Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Sciences, and National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA). In addition, several civil society organizations provide varied training activities. These institutions/organizations offer certificate and diploma level programs in social work-related methods and fields of practice including community development; case management; psychosocial counselling; and social administration.

3. TRAINING CHALLENGES

- Absence/lack of effective system of accreditation of training programs, especially at higher level training, to promote/enforce best practices for the training of social service workforce; as well as training progression from lower to higher levels.
- Absence/lack of effective system of certification/verification of knowledge/skill base of social service workforce at various levels of training to ensure good outcomes for clients most of who are poor and vulnerable.
- Absence/lack of effective oversight system for social service workforce to ensure that the practice is in accordance with desired professional ethical standards.
- Lack of adequate internship/practicum opportunities for social service workforce trainees especially at higher level training, arising from reluctance to provide the same by some relevant human service organizations for varied reasons including lack of qualified personnel/staff to provide internship services.

4. PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVED TRAINING

- The prospects for improved social service workforce training in Zambia are dependent upon, among other things, strengthening the organizational capacity of the professional Association of Social Workers of Zambia (SWAZ), to be able to introduce and enforce best practices for the accreditation of training programs at all levels.
- A critical component of SWAZ capacity building is the provision of necessary legal back-up support in form of an Act of

Parliament/legal instrument, as is the case with other professional associations in Zambia. Currently, SWAZ does not have the legal authority to provide necessary oversight of the training and practice activities of social service workforce in Zambia to ensure good outcomes for people served.
