

Social Service Workforce Training in the West and Central Africa Region

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Acronyms

ASSWA	Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa
ASWEA	Association for Social Work Education in Africa
BEPC	<i>Brevet d'Etudes de Premier Cycle</i>
CAS	<i>Contrôleur de l'Action Sociale</i> (Benin)
CBO	community-based organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CFJ	<i>Centre de Formation Judiciaire</i> (Senegal)
CPF	<i>Code des Personnes et de la Famille</i> (Burkina Faso)
CPS	<i>Centre de Promotion Sociale</i> (Benin)
CRA	Child Rights Act (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone)
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSWE	Council on Social Work Education
DIVAS	<i>Division des Affaires Sociales</i> (Democratic Republic of Congo)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENAM	<i>Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature</i> (Benin, Cameroon)
ENSP	<i>Ecole Nationale de la Santé Publique</i> (Niger)
ENSP	<i>Ecole Nationale Supérieure de la Police</i> (Cameroon)
ENP	<i>Ecole Nationale de Police</i> (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Senegal)
ENTSS	<i>Ecole Nationale des Travailleurs Sociaux Spécialisés</i> (Senegal)
ESAS	<i>Ecole Supérieure des Assistants Sociaux</i> (Benin)
FSU	Family Support Unit (Liberia)
FTR	family tracing and reunification
GBV	gender-based violence
GD	group discussion
HND	Higher National Diploma (Nigeria)
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IBCR	International Bureau for Children's Rights (Canada)
INFS	<i>Institut National de Formation Sociale</i> (Côte d'Ivoire)
INFTS	<i>Institut National de Formation en Travail Social</i> (Burkina Faso)
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
INTS	<i>Institut National de Travail Social</i> (Cameroon)
ISS	International Social Service (Switzerland)
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MASSN	<i>Ministre de l'Action Sociale et de la Solidarité Nationale</i> (Burkina Faso and Senegal)
MSW	Masters of Social Work
NBTE	National Board for Technical Education (Nigeria)
ND	National Diploma (Nigeria)
NGO	non-government organization
NID	National Innovation Diploma (Nigeria)
NFP	Nigeria Police Force
NPE	National Policy on Education (Nigeria)
NTC	National Training Center (Sierra Leone)

NYSC	National Youth Service Corps (Nigeria)
OVC	orphans and vulnerable children
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (USA)
SIWES	Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (Nigeria)
SSI	semi-structured interview
TOS	<i>textes d'organisation des emplois spécifiques</i> (Burkina Faso)
TSAS	<i>Technicien Supérieur de l'Action Sociale</i> (Benin and Niger)
UBE	Universal Basic Education (Nigeria)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WACPS	Women and Children Protection Section (Liberia National Police)
WCA	West and Central Africa

Executive Summary

The focus of this study is to better understand how social workers and related professionals are trained and educated—both formally and informally—to engage in social work practice, especially as it is related to child protection, in the West and Central Africa region. The study defined the social service workforce broadly, including not only professional social workers but paraprofessionals such as NGO and CBO workers who through their daily work attempt to support vulnerable children and families. Research occurred in two phases, an initial phase from November through December 2013 when documents were collated from 13 countries across the region and phone interviews were conducted with relevant individuals. A second phase included field visits to five West African countries in January and February 2014—Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal—during which the research team conducted 42 semi-structured interviews and 27 group discussions with 253 individuals.

Key Findings

There is tremendous variability in the formal social work training available country by country, ranging from relatively short diploma programs to PhDs. In general, French-speaking countries’ formal training programs are not housed in universities but rather in government-run training institutes whose curricula are primarily designed for civil servants who have passed entrance exams. English-speaking countries demonstrate a combination of both training institutes affiliated with relevant social welfare ministries and university-based programs that offer undergraduate programs as well as a few higher-level programs at the Masters and PhD levels. With over 15 social work schools and institutes, Nigeria has by far the most opportunities for social work training, a finding that is perhaps not surprising given the size of the Nigerian population.¹

A core challenge for training and professional development is that formal social workers’ job descriptions and legal mandate are unclear in most countries in the region. Among the countries from which documents were requested during Phase 1 of the research, only Burkina Faso has clear multi-level job descriptions for the different categories of social worker. Other countries—such as Côte d’Ivoire and Benin—have different qualifications for various levels of social worker from an administrative vantage, but the accompanying job roles and responsibilities are either embryonic or non-existent. Furthermore, the staffing levels are so low that social workers do not have the possibility to specialize in these contexts. Laws to clarify the boundaries of the social work profession in Ghana and Nigeria have been in development for many years, but neither country yet has a legally approved framework for the social work profession, creating ambiguity around the relationship between social workers, NGO workers, and the populations they serve. This lack of clear objectives for the social work profession has profound implications for social work training; ultimately, this gap will need to be addressed before efforts to revise social work curricula should be undertaken. And equally important, this gap creates a motivation

¹ The population of Nigeria (169 million) surpasses the combined populations of the 11 other countries in this study (excluding DRC): Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Cote d’Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone (137 million).

deficiency for social workers, who in fieldwork in three of the five countries strongly expressed that their profession suffered invisibility because populations and governments did not know or understand the role of social workers. Additionally, social work systems in these countries face minimal or non-existent funding to perform even the most basic social work functions, adding to the frustrations of social workers and the populations they serve.

Training sessions provided for NGO workers, CBO workers, and other paraprofessional or auxiliary social workers that were analyzed for this study indicate that these sessions or modules delivered outside of the government social work training schemes are—with some notable exceptions—conducted in a largely short-term and issue-focused manner. This results in a piecemeal approach to training and education, precluding holistic understanding of key issues and solutions.

Another key finding from this research stems in large part from the lack of clarity around roles and inequalities in education and training levels. As a result, the relationships between government and non-government social workers demonstrated various forms of tension in each of the countries where fieldwork was conducted.

Finally, the relevance and adaptation of training curricula to cultural contexts varies across the region but are generally perceived to be inadequately adapted to local realities. In some countries, notably Burkina Faso and Senegal, social workers generally find their training to be extremely relevant to their daily practice. In the other countries where fieldwork was conducted, however, social workers expressed that their training was too theoretical or rooted in social work practice in Europe and North America. This frustration was expressed not only by government social workers but also by NGO and CBO workers, who felt that they were “doing the bidding” of the government or of international agencies and simply being trained to that task in a way that was not necessarily empowering.

Theory

Social worker training available at social work institutes and universities throughout the region appropriately draws from a broad range of theories emanating from psychology, sociology, the law, and other disciplines. With a handful of exceptions, training for NGO and CBO workers is quite scattershot, or random and haphazard in scope, bringing together wide-ranging topics proposed by a variety of international NGOs but not long enough to delve fully into the theories underpinning the topics. Across all of the countries where fieldwork was conducted, study respondents indicated that a core theoretical approach that underlined their work was a strengths-based or assets approach, related to resiliency theory. Concerning child protection, many of the curricula contain coursework in child rights and child protection. In terms of pedagogical methods, classroom-based training appeared to be taught primarily through lecture rather than through more participatory approaches.

Research

Generally speaking, social science research methods represent a relative strength of social work training throughout the WCA region; a number of formal training institutes as well as NGO- and CBO-focused training modules cover basic research principles and methods for the trainees to be able to generate and use evidence in their social service practice. Conversely, however, the most

recent country-level research on child protection and social welfare topics was only rarely integrated into training materials, which are not regularly revised or updated.

Policy

The legislative and policy frameworks contained in training throughout WCA tend heavily toward international frameworks (e.g., the Convention of the Rights of the Child) and focus to a lesser degree on regional (e.g., the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child) and national laws. There were some exceptions to this rule, notably in Francophone countries. In Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal specific modules dedicated to the legal framework for social work were incorporated in the training modules. In addition, at the University of Ghana, coursework included an emphasis on regional and national laws and policy issues, in addition to international legislation.

Regarding the degree to which training programs *emphasized policy-driven change*, there was much less emphasis in the available training programs. Research participants in most countries where fieldwork was conducted nearly unanimously responded that they had not been trained in or engaged in policy change through their work. An exception to this can be seen at the University of Ghana, in which coursework encouraged students to critically examine and analyze local and national laws and policies. In other countries, highly-localized advocacy was described in limited ways.

Practice

In most of the countries analyzed for this study, the practice of social work was a fundamental and integrated component of training programs, especially for government social workers. The concept of alternation between theory and practice was an explicitly stated pedagogical goal and one that is aligned with global social work education standards. This alternation often came in the form of internships, whose structure, supervision, and length varied tremendously from country to country. Internships seemed especially central in the Francophone countries, and in all countries, social work students expressed enthusiasm for the role that internships played in their education and training.

Recommendations

The crucial step of collectively clarifying social service workers' *raison d'être*—and articulating it clearly from the community to the international levels—must be a first priority if the multi-step journey to strengthening the social service workforce in the West and Central Africa region is to begin.

1) In countries of the WCA region, preliminary processes to **determine the specific roles and responsibilities of social workers and social service workers** more broadly should be the starting point for eventual discussions about strengthening the training programs available. Discussions about the educational and accreditation standards needed for social service workers at various levels will almost necessarily form a core component of these recommended processes to set clearer boundaries and goals for the practice of social work. Other areas in which national stakeholders will need to make explicit decisions include the relationship between government

social workers and other workforce representatives, such as NGO and CBO workers and community leaders and in which instances each of these sets of actors has a mandate to act.

2) Once the roles of various members and representatives of the broadly defined social service workforce have been clearly identified, it is recommended that a **structured process of curricula reform** occur in training institutes and universities throughout the region. Curricula reform should be grounded both in the realities that social workers face in their daily work and in international standards related to child protection and social work more broadly.

3) Governments and international agencies working across the WCA region should work collectively to **streamline the disparate strands of training that are offered by NGOs and CBOs to NGO, CBO, and government staff**. The consultation processes described above should also create spaces in which NGO and CBO workers who contribute to the social service landscape can express their self-identified training needs. In addition to basic social work principles and training, many workers suggested that they would like support in organizational management and development, key factors for the development of a strong and sustainable civil society to buttress governmental social workforces in countries throughout the region.

4) It is evident that there is also a great need to **develop social work education capacity** to bolster the skills of the very teachers and trainers responsible for ensuring the training of the next generation of social workers. Long-term solutions that ensure that the faculty members of the training institutes have sufficient theoretical, practical, and pedagogical training are needed in countries throughout the region.

5) Potential partnerships remain an area for further exploration as this study did not reveal any structured, equitable, and truly mutually beneficial partnerships between, for example, schools of social work in the global North and schools of social work in the WCA region. A process to identify schools of social work interested in partnering with the various social work training institutes and universities throughout the WCA region—and to do so in a way that respects cultural norms and the need for locally relevant training—is needed. The presence of ISS's new regional office in Burkina Faso should be capitalized upon, and discussions with organizations like Building Professional Social Work should also be explored.

Action Steps

Based on the above recommendations, the following action steps are recommended:

1. Conversations with stakeholders during field visits indicated that they are very keen to learn from the successes and challenges of other WCA countries. Given the large number of WCA countries in this study that belong to ECOWAS (e.g., Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone), it is recommended that **ECOWAS, in collaboration with other actors, support a regional guidance workshop** resulting in the development of a region-wide network where stakeholders from each of these countries exchange experiences and develop an agenda to strengthening the social service workforce within their countries. This workshop and resulting network would be well placed

to facilitate the sharing of Africa-specific social work curricula (for example, from Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal), so as not to continuously “reinvent the wheel.”

2. Based on the regional guidance from the ECOWAS-sponsored workshop (see Action Step 1 above), **national social service policymakers in each country should clarify the definition, roles, and responsibilities of social work specific to their context.** These country-specific initiatives should be accompanied by UNICEF country offices. Working closely with the federal government, each UNICEF country office should support the development of a Technical Working Group, including key stakeholders from every level that engages in social work training (academic, NGO, CBO) within each country to provide support and guidance to the development of definitions, roles and responsibilities of social workers. Even though this research revealed that social workers across countries were often frustrated with the means available to them to undertake their work, many had a clear sense of mission and were able to specifically describe their daily tasks. This strength should therefore be capitalized upon in the initiatives to develop country-specific definitions, roles and responsibilities of social work.
3. Based on the country-specific discussions around definition, roles and responsibilities of social work (see Action Step 2 above), **ISS (supported by the UNICEF WCAR office) should lead a second, region-wide workshop to support countries’ development of core competencies related to social workers with support from other key stakeholders.**
4. With a mandate to promote social work, best practice models, and the facilitation of international cooperation, **the IASSW (with support from IFSW and CSWE) should develop global guidelines for equitable exchange between social work training institutes and organizations in the WCA region and social work institutions in the Global North to encourage more responsible partnerships.** These guidelines should move beyond placements for students and field trips for visiting professors towards real engagement between institutions where *both* sides benefit.
5. With the support of the UNICEF WCA office, **the global Child Protection Working Group should be engaged to develop a system of information sharing with social work training institutes and organizations in the WCA region.** Multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), as well as academic papers, gray literature, and other documents that address current child protection issues relevant to social work should be shared in order to ensure that social workers have the latest national, regional, and global research. The CPWG could fulfill this task through an electronic newsletter or by creating brief video lectures on specific child protection issues that can be shared cross-culturally in classrooms.
6. Finally, **the UNICEF WCA office should engage independent researchers to conduct more detailed studies to determine reliable numbers of how many social workers, paraprofessional social workers, and natural helpers exist in each country, as well as the number and types of social service workers required for the social service system to effectively function.**

I. Background and Rationale

Globally, there has been increasing recognition of the need for actors wishing to protect children from abuse, exploitation, violence, and neglect and to support families to progress beyond issue-specific policies and programs for children and families towards a more integrated and systemic approach.² This shifting emphasis to a more holistic approach encompasses proactive and preventative child and family welfare services rather than simply reactive interventions. Moving beyond an exclusive focus on the individual child, interventions are being designed to take into account the overlapping systems that support children, such as families, schools, communities, civil society, and government. In the West and Central Africa (WCA) Region, systems analyses at the country level in several countries as well as cross-country analyses have demonstrated the need to focus not only on the official, government systems but also the community-based systems in which children, families, and extended kinship networks are situated.³

The social service workforce is central to the development of this more integrated and systems-based approach to child protection. A child protection and family welfare system incorporates and is put into action by numerous professionals from different disciplines and sectors, including medical, psychological and law enforcement personnel. Insofar as child protection is concerned, professional social workers with specialist skills to identify and respond to child protection concerns according to policy, procedure, and care standards have an essential role to play in ensuring that services are available to vulnerable children and families. They require both the professional mandate and requisite powers to make important decisions in a child's life, an authority that must be accompanied by a duty to protect. Social workers must therefore have a clear description and understanding of their role and, most importantly, the practical skills to undertake it. As the approach to planning and implementation of services becomes increasingly systems-based, staff across government departments and non-governmental agencies will require more clearly defined roles and responsibilities within that system as well as the necessary capacity to carry out their functions. One of the core functions of this study is to understand the training that social workers receive in line with the professional mandates as social workers and actors responsible for promoting child protection and family welfare.

There has also been recent attention focused on paraprofessionals or “front-line workers” who do not fit into the strict educational criteria set out for professional social workers in many countries. These workers may not be professional social workers, but they must understand their role, powers, and duties within the system. They must also be trained in the specific skills required to fulfill that role. Therefore, another key question for this project will be to explore and to understand the training received by such paraprofessionals as well as how their mandates and functions overlap with those of professional social workers. In the WCA region, systems analyses have demonstrated that national governments often rely on workers within non-government organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide many of the local-level services for children and families, sometimes supported by financial or material

² For a catalogue of recent thinking on strengthening national child protection systems, see UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children and World Vision (2013).

³ See, for example, Child Frontiers (June 2011) and Krueger, Thompstone, and Crispin (2013).

resources from government agencies while at other times supported by communities themselves or by external donors. Although community-based workers, NGO workers, and “paraprofessionals” often serve as the frontline for dealing with cases of family welfare and child protection in West African communities, little is understood about their training backgrounds and their comprehensive skillset. However, as the role of individual nation-states evolves and services expand, the social welfare sector is becoming more professionalized. The proliferation of capacity-building programs is welcomed; however, these trainings often do not appear to address the underlying challenge of creating a strong, specialized, and recognized social work profession that engages with the multiple systems—statutory, community-based, and other—that support child protection.

The WCA region has historically been underrepresented in global discussions of the social welfare workforce, compared even to other regions of the African continent. A compilation of studies on social work education—bringing together papers written throughout the 1970s and the 1980s through the now-defunct Association for Social Work Education in Africa (ASWEA)—brought together scores of analyses, case studies, and other reports on social work education on the continent.⁴ Of these documents, only a few relate to social work education in West and Central Africa; Francophone countries seem particularly neglected. Today, of the 23 country-level African members of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), just seven are from the WCA region. Among these, only three are from Francophone countries despite the fact that over 20 countries in WCA are primarily Francophone from an administrative point of view. (See Table 1.) Nonetheless, these studies and members represent a starting point from which more systematic analysis can be built.

Table 1: African Membership in the International Federation of Social Workers

Benin*	Liberia	Nigeria	Sudan	Lesotho
Botswana	Libya	Rwanda	Swaziland	Niger*
Djibouti	Madagascar	Senegal*	Tanzania	Zimbabwe
Ghana	Mauritius	Sierra Leone	Uganda	
Kenya	Morocco	South Africa	Zambia	

Bolded countries are in the WCA region
 Countries with a * are administratively Francophone

Source: International Federation of Social Workers (2014)

In light of these issues, this study represents a comprehensive mapping exercise of universities and institutions that engage—both formally and informally—in training social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGO and CBO practitioners who engage in child protection activities. To date, a mapping and analysis of such training institutes and their curricula has not yet taken place. A methodologically rigorous mapping of social work training programs, curricula, and other initiatives will provide a clear overview of the existing resources available within the broadly defined social work education system in WCA. Furthermore, this study seeks to understand the key competencies that social workers require in relation to child protection, the training that they already receive to bolster such skills, and remaining gaps; the study will also

⁴ See Association for Social Work Education in Africa (1971 – 1981).

seek to identify potential partnerships for capacity building within this context. Ultimately, this mapping has been designed to inform the development of regional strategies to strengthen the social service workforce.

The focus of this research is to better understand how social workers and related professionals are trained and educated—both formally and informally—in order to engage in social work practice, especially as such practice is related to child protection. The significant developments currently underway in terms of training and capacity building of social service workers in the WCA region, as well as their unique roles within the social welfare system, are an especially important area of focus in order to:

- Ensure harmonization of practice, education and training with national strategies and international standards; and
- Maximize their current and potential contribution to planning, implementing, managing, monitoring, and developing child protection initiatives in the WCA region.

The purpose and objectives of this study are as follows:

- To provide a comprehensive overview of the social work-related educational activities of universities and social work institutions in the WCA region, such as programs, courses, and curricula;
- To provide an overview of initiatives and capacity-building efforts by NGOs and CBOs, including training modules and courses that exist for social workers, paraprofessionals, and other civil society practitioners engaged in child protection activities;
- To identify potential partnerships for curriculum development and capacity building that can be adapted to country contexts, with a specific focus on Senegal, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria;
- To develop recommendations for the next steps in WCA regional activities to strengthen the social welfare workforce.

This study focused on 14 countries, most of them members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), including: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia. Each of these countries were considered as part of the desk review during Phase I, and attempts were made to schedule phone or Skype interviews with a representative from each country. During Phase II of the study (January-February 2014), field visits were conducted in five countries: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. These sites were chosen in order to reflect a range of both Anglophone and Francophone countries in the region. Through site visits, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and other field-based methods of inquiry, Phase II explored in greater depth issues emerging through the first phase of the study and sought to ground the findings from Phase I in the realities of social work practice throughout the region.

II. Methodology

In Phase I of the study, a desk review was conducted of documents and materials pertaining to existing social work training programs and curricula in the region, including those operated through academic institutions as well as by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, and other actors. The purpose of this exercise was to identify the *types of initiatives* being carried out in particular countries, the *pedagogical and theoretical frameworks* underlying these efforts, and the similarities and differences that can be seen in various approaches. This exercise also sought to identify gaps in available training initiatives as well as promising approaches that can potentially inform curriculum development across country contexts. The desk review was also used by the research team to identify areas of additional exploration during field visits mentioned above.

In order to gather documents, a list of key stakeholders was developed by the research team, in consultation with the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO). This list included UNICEF Chiefs of Child Protection from each country considered in the study, as well as individuals from academic institutions, NGOs, and other organizations. A request was sent by email to all stakeholders, inviting them to submit documents as well as to participate in a phone or Skype interview with a member of the research team. The request also invited stakeholders to recommend other individuals who could potentially provide documents or participate in interviews. An overview of the stakeholders contacted as part of this process is contained in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Stakeholders contacted (by type and country)

Country	UN	Government	Academic	NGO	Total
Benin	1	2	1	3	7
Burkina Faso	2	0	3	2	7
Cameroon	1	1	0	2	4
Congo- Brazzaville	0	0	0	1	1
Côte d'Ivoire	1	0	2	2	5
DRC	2	1	0	2	5
Ghana	3	0	2	0	5
Liberia	2	0	0	0	2
Mauritania	2	0	1	1	4
Niger	3	1	0	1	5

⁵ In several instances, academic training institutes are run by the government. In these cases, the contacts were categorized as academic although they could have been tallied in either category.

Country	UN	Government	Academic	NGO	Total
Nigeria	1	1	2	2	6
Senegal	2	0	2	0	4
Sierra Leone	2	6	0	8	16
The Gambia	1	0	0	1	2
Other (e.g., research experts; regional-level specialists)	1	0	8	4	13
TOTAL	24	12	21	29	86

This process resulted in the submission of over 100 documents from 12 countries (no documents were received from Congo-Brazzaville or The Gambia), including a range of program materials, curricula, and reports describing social work training programs in the region. Once documents were received, they were sorted by country, and examined based on the following inclusion criteria:

- Academic or grey literature collected must pertain to formal or non-formal social work training initiatives in West or Central Africa;
- The literature must describe or present a program, approach, curriculum, or module currently in-use or recently used (e.g., within the past seven years) in one or more of the countries examined in this review; and
- Both French and English documents were considered.

Based on these criteria, submitted materials were examined, and those not meeting inclusion criteria were excluded from the review. For example, attendance lists, financial reports, or general background materials were removed, as were materials that discussed countries outside the scope of the review. Following this process, 113 total documents were examined. The collation and coding matrix developed for this exercise is [available as a separate spreadsheet](#).

In addition to the inclusion criteria described above, the research team developed a *Pedagogy Matrix* by which to evaluate the documents and materials that were examined. The matrix focused on four primary areas relevant to social work: (1) *theory*, (2) *research*, (3) *policy*, and (4) *practice*, and provides a means by which to compare and critically analyze educational strategies used across country contexts. An overview of these areas as they are defined within the context of this study is below:

Theory

Within the field of child protection and social work more broadly, the theoretical framework used for training can help us to understand particular behaviors or social phenomenon and significantly informs the decision-making processes that will ensue. Broadly speaking, theory represents a set of ideas or principles that guide analysis and practice. In light of the diversity that exists between particular children, families, and cultural contexts, it is useful for social work practitioners to have an understanding of multiple theoretical approaches to inform their practice.

Moreover, an awareness of multiple theoretical approaches can challenge social workers to engage in critical analysis and question beliefs, assumptions, and facts that they encounter in order to arrive at more nuanced and culturally grounded assessments. For the purposes of this analysis, theory was broadly defined as (1) the framework or approach that a particular training or program of study took on, as well as (2) particular theories taught within a particular training or curriculum. In this way, theory is defined loosely to include formal social theories and approaches (such as social learning theory, Erikson's stages of development, or an empowerment approach) as well as pedagogical approaches to training (such as participatory approaches).

Research

Evidence-based practice and decision-making represent important components of the social work profession. By integrating research findings into practice, social workers can better understand particular populations or social issues and draw connections with the larger context within which such issues exist. Through conducting research, social workers can assess the needs and resources of people in their environments, evaluate the effectiveness of services and programs, determine the costs and benefits of particular interventions, and understand the impact of social policy on the populations that they serve. For this analysis, the research team looked at research as two different aspects which impact social work training: (1) evidence that is integrated into the curriculum, for example prevalence rates of child abuse in a particular context, and (2) research methods and skills taught to those being trained, including aspects of study design, data analysis, as well as principles of monitoring and evaluation.

Policy

Policy at the local, national, and international levels—as well as within the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of intervention—has significant impact on the practice of social work practice; conversely, social workers can themselves engage with policy at multiple levels, including analysis, development, planning, and advocacy. Social workers can use their advocacy skills to propose and change policies in order to achieve the goal of social and economic justice. Policy and advocacy go hand-in-hand in social work practice with advocacy as the cornerstone upon which social work is built. Including policy and advocacy in the daily life of social work practice is an effective and powerful avenue for enhancing the profession's goals and mission of social and economic justice. Within the context of this study, policy was looked at in two ways, including: 1) the types of policies incorporated into particular curricula and training approaches; and 2) the degree to which programs equip students to engage in policy-focused action.

Practice

As a practice-based discipline, social work education places significant emphasis on equipping students to engage in culturally competent practice and to operate according to the guiding principles of the field. Practice-based learning is central to this process, usually in the form of a practicum (otherwise known as a stage, internship, field work, or preceptorship). A practicum is an experience that requires the practical applications of theory and conceptual knowledge. The Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) *Educational Policies and Academic Standards* state:

In social work, the signature pedagogy is field education. The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical

world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice (8).

For many students of social work, the practicum is a useful, significant, and powerful learning experience. It is during practicum that the concepts, principles, and theories discussed in the classroom “come to life” and the social issues learned take on relevance in the lives of children and families. In addition to bring the practicum experience into the classroom and vice versa, social work education should also emphasize the importance of drawing from participants’ practical experiences. For this analysis, practice was conceptualized broadly as (1) skills that social workers were taught in order to practice in the field, as well as (2) how the training connects to real-world, on-the-ground practice.

Based on these concepts, Table 3 describes the components of the *Pedagogy Matrix* for this study:

Table 3: Pedagogy Matrix

Primary Area	Basis of analysis
Theory	<p>Social work theories taught across the region</p> <p>Similarities and differences in approaches between and among countries, particularly taking into account the Anglophone/Francophone dimensions</p> <p>Linkages between curricula and principles of child protection</p>
Research	<p>Ways in which research is incorporated into curricula and training materials</p> <p>Similarities and differences in the epistemologies and approaches to research that are emphasized between and among countries</p> <p>Linkages between research and practice that are emphasized</p> <p>Degree to which programs are preparing students to become independent researchers</p>
Policy	<p>Ways in which international, regional, national, and local laws and policies are incorporated in existing curricula and training approaches</p> <p>Ways in which curricula emphasizes policy-driven change</p> <p>Similarities and differences between and among countries</p>
Practice	<p>Ways in which curricula and training programs prepare students for practice</p> <p>Similarities and differences between and among countries</p>

	Linkages in curricula between practice and the other areas of the framework (research, policy, theory)
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As mentioned above, the research team also invited stakeholders to participate in phone interviews. In consultation with UNICEF, the research team developed a semi-structured questionnaire (see **Appendix I, Tool 1**) to guide this process. Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants via a phone/Skype conversation, lasting approximately 30-90 minutes in late 2013 and early 2014.

During Phase II of the study, field visits were conducted to the following five countries: Burkina Faso (Mark Canavera), Côte d’Ivoire (Mark Canavera), Ghana (Debbie Landis), and Nigeria (Bree Akesson). Primary data collection was also carried out in Senegal by Miranda Armstrong of the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office. Within these countries, primary data collection took place during the following dates:

- Burkina Faso: January 20-25, 2014 and February 4, 2014 (7 days);
- Côte d’Ivoire: February 10-14, 2014 (5 days);
- Ghana: February 3-7, 2014 (5 days);
- Nigeria: January 12-24, 2014 (13 days); and
- Senegal: January – February 2014 (4 days).⁶

In each country, field visits consisted of site visits, semi-structured interviews (SSIs) and group discussions (GDs) with a diverse range of stakeholders who are knowledgeable about the current state of social work training and practice. Study respondents for SSIs and GDs included:

- Social work professors, instructors, administrators, and trainers at universities and training institutes;
- Social work students and recent graduates;
- Government social workers and administrators;
- NGO and CBO social work practitioners and frontline workers;
- Other key stakeholders as identified during the fieldwork

These data collection activities explored the types of training programs available (both formal and non-formal) as well as the ways in which social work training contributes to practice in the field. This research also sought to identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs, as well as gaps and areas for future capacity building.

In addition to the SSIs and GDs, the research team used a case story method, which aimed to better understand social work processes by asking a practicing social worker to narrate the story of a recent case they have managed. While narrating the story, participants were asked “Thinking back on your training, what courses or skills did you learn that helped you undertake this step of the process?” This question allowed social workers to reflect upon their decision-

⁶ Field research in Senegal was more limited in scope than the other field visits, including only semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders.

making process in a systematic manner and revealed sources of knowledge, as well as strengths and gaps of current social work training programs.

The tools used for field-level data collection, which were reviewed by UNICEF prior to their usage, are available in **Appendix I**. French translations are available from the authors upon request.

Table 4: Data collection activities and respondents by country

Country	# of SSIs	# of GDs	# of male respondents	# of female respondents	Total # of respondents
Burkina Faso	5	9	55	18	73
Côte d'Ivoire	7	6	30	22	52
Ghana	12	5	19	17	38
Nigeria	13	7	49	31	80
Senegal	5	0	8	2	10
Total	42	27	161	90	253

See **Appendix II** for a more detailed disaggregation of the study respondents.

III. Historical and Current Social Work Education Associations

Before engaging in the primary document analysis, the research team examined materials pertaining to the history of social work training in Africa, in order to provide contextual background for the study, and identify potential ways in which programs and training initiatives have evolved over time.⁷ In light of the study's emphasis on *current* curricula and training programs, historical documents were not examined using the *Pedagogy Matrix*, but were reviewed as a source of background information. Findings from the historical documents described the formation of the Association for Social Work Education in Africa (ASWEA), which was formally established in 1971 at the Third Expert Group Meeting of Social Work Educators and Administrators, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The establishment of this body represented the culmination of regional consultations that first began in 1965, following the Alexandra Seminar for Social Work Education, which was represented by members from Egypt, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, and Tunisia, who expressed the need to develop a formal body to oversee the professionalization and standardization of academic training in social work in the region. A draft constitution for the Association was circulated in 1967 to institutions from the countries previously mentioned along with those from Uganda, Senegal, Rwanda, Togo, Zaire, and Madagascar. A follow-up meeting was held in 1969, resulting in the formation of a Working Committee, which ultimately led to the establishment of the Association in 1971.⁸ Despite the initial momentum surrounding its establishment, the Association for Social Work Education did not sustain itself over time, although it set the stage for future work and curriculum development in the region.

Although the ASWEA no longer functions, 2005 saw the launch of the Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa (ASSWA). The recent Davis (2009) report "Human Capacity within Child Welfare Systems: The Social Work Workforce in Africa" summarizes this newer association thus:

The Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa (ASSWA) was launched in April 2005 to continue activities that had once been carried out by the Association of Social Work Education in Africa, which was active from the 1960 into the 1980s. It is organized into four regions, Southern, Eastern, Western (Anglo and Francophone) and Northern, each with a representative responsible for organizing regional activities. The current president, Lengwe Mwansa, assistant professor of social work, University of Botswana, has initiated an audit of social work educational institutions, although information on number of graduates, where they work, and future specialization needs is proving very difficult to obtain because record-keeping is a major problem (L. Mwansa, personal communication, August 14, 2009). So far only 44% of African schools belong to the AASWA (Hochfeld, Selipsky, Mupedziswa & Chitereka, 2009), so simply organizing has numerous challenges. Despite the critical need for ASSWA to become the voice of the

⁷ The historical documents, which have been compiled by Dr. Linda Kreitzer and are stored in an online repository of historical documents at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, are available as the collection "Association for Social Work Education in Africa (ASWEA) Papers, 1971-1989," at this website: <http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/?inventory/U/Collections&c=AG3303/I/9014> (accessed December 24, 2013).

⁸ ASWEA. (1986). *Association for Social Work Education in Africa*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Addis Ababa University/ASWEA.

schools and the profession and to speak out on local practice needs in Africa, the lack of a planning budget is one of many organizational constraints to fulfilling such mandates as an annual forum and regular business meetings. But the structure is now in place and the voluntary efforts of office holders demonstrate their commitment (Lengwe-Katembula Mwansa, personal communication, September 3, 2009). (p.17)

Recent years have therefore seen a resurgence of interest in social work training on the African continent, reviving and updating an area of study and practice that received focused attention from academics, policymakers, and practitioners in the 1960s and 1970s.

IV. Multi-Country Training Initiatives

Although not the primary focus of the study, the Phase II document review also identified and examined a number of multi-country training initiatives being carried out in the broader WCA region or as part of a regional training initiative.⁹ Documents were analyzed and included in the below findings if they referenced at least one of the countries considered in this review; in those cases, information was incorporated into the discussion of findings for that country in the section below. As such, multi-country documents were not examined using the *Pedagogy Matrix*, but were reviewed as an additional source of contextual information, and to inform country-specific analysis.

Four regional training initiatives emerged for analysis over the course of this study:

- Save the Children—sometimes working in conjunction with UNICEF—worked in the 2000s to integrate child protection and children’s rights into the training of police and military actors across the region;
- Save the Children also developed “sub-regional” training materials on gender-based violence (GBV) for use with staff and partner organizations in three countries of the region: Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone;
- The International Bureau for Children’s Rights (IBCR), a Canada-based NGO with a regional office in Dakar, has worked with national police-training institutes in a number of countries—including Cameroon, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal—to introduce child-friendly policing training modules into national curricula;
- International Social Service (ISS), a Swiss-founded NGO with a regional office for West Africa located in Burkina Faso, has begun a series of French-language trainings for workers with children in residential settings. Although the West Africa office is new, ISS has ambitious plans for raising the level of social service training throughout the region and for creating a more robust network among the region’s social service training institutes and universities.

⁹ The regional-level training documents are available at this link:
https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B_sSh7ZWSF3JZVNkTmhMdVE5TWs&usp=sharing

V. Findings

General Findings

Once the final document set was identified as described above, materials were first examined in order to gather general information on the types of training programs available in the countries included in this review. Attention was given to the types of degrees and programs available in particular countries, as well as the institutions or organizations involved in these efforts. This included an analysis of formal programs offered by academic institutions as well as other training and capacity building efforts being implemented by UN agencies, NGOs, or other actors. An overview of both formal training programs as well as shorter training programs targeting practitioners is contained in the section below.

1) The first general finding across all countries is that there is general momentum for social service workforce training throughout both French- and English-speaking countries in the WCA region. Growing from a base of simply a few training institutions in the late 20th century, the past few decades have seen an increasingly large and diverse spectrum of formal training initiatives in many countries throughout the region.

There is a tremendous diversity from country to country in terms of formal social service training programs available, variety in terms of program length, curriculum content, and other factors. Table 5 presents an overview of the institution-based tertiary training programs available throughout the region.

Table 5: Overview of formal social work and/or child protection training programs currently available in WCA

Country	Institution	Programs/degrees available	Program length
Benin	<i>Ecole Supérieure des Assistants Sociaux (ESAS)</i>	<i>Action Sociale :</i> 1) <i>Contrôleur de l'Action Sociale (CAS)</i> 2) <i>Technicien Supérieur de l'Action Sociale (TSAS)</i>	1) Two years of post-baccalaureate studies 2) Three years of post-baccalaureate studies
	<i>Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature (ENAM)</i>	Social administration	Two years of study at ENAM following the three-year program at ESAS
	<i>Ecole Nationale de Police (ENP)</i>	Coursework on child rights and child protection modules integrated into national police training integrated into curriculum	n/a
Burkina Faso	<i>Institut National de Formation en Travail Social (INFTS) – Ecole des Cadres Moyens</i>	<i>Education Spécialisée :</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Moniteurs (niveau C)</i> • <i>Educateurs spécialisés (niveau B)</i> <i>Assistance Sociale :</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adjoints sociaux (niveau C)</i> • <i>Assistants sociaux (niveau B)</i> <i>Education des Jeunes Enfants :</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Moniteurs (niveau C)</i> • <i>Educateurs (niveau B)</i> 	Level C trainings require two years of post-BEPC studies. Level B trainings require three years of post-BEPC studies.
	<i>Institut National de Formation en Travail Social (INFTS) – Ecole des Cadres Supérieurs</i>	<i>Education Spécialisée :</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Inspecteurs (niveau A)</i> <i>Assistance Sociale :</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Administrateurs (niveau A)</i> <i>Education des Jeunes Enfants :</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Inspecteurs (niveau A)</i> 	Level A trainings require two years of post-level B trainings.
Cameroon	<i>Ecole Nationale Supérieure de la Police (ENSP)</i>	Coursework on child-friendly policing integrated into curriculum	n/a
Côte d'Ivoire	<i>Institut National de la</i>	<i>Education Préscolaire :</i>	

Country	Institution	Programs/degrees available	Program length
	<i>Formation Sociale</i> (INFS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Educateurs préscolaires adjoints</i> • <i>Educateurs préscolaires</i> <p><i>Assistance social :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Assistants sociaux adjoints</i> • <i>Assistants sociaux</i> <p><i>Education spécialisée :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maitre d'éducation spécialisée</i> • <i>Educateur spécialisé</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two years of post-BEPC training. • Three years of post-baccalaureate training • Two years of post-BEPC training. • Three years of post-baccalaureate training • Three years of post-baccalaureate training. • Two years of training after a two-year undergraduate degree
	<i>Ecole Nationale de Police</i> (ENP)	Coursework on child-friendly policing integrated into curriculum	n/a
Ghana	Ghana University Department of Social Work	Diploma Program in Social Work (<i>currently being phased out</i>) Bachelor's Degree in Social Work Masters of Philosophy (MPhil) in Social Work Masters of Social Work (MSW) (<i>in planning stages; not yet operational</i>) Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Social Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two years • Four years • Two years after Bachelor's degree • Two years after Bachelor's degree • Variable
	School of Social Work (government)	Diploma in Social Work	Two years or one-year "sandwich program" for working individuals
	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Department of Sociology and Social Work	Bachelor's Degree in Social Work	Four years
	Judicial Training Institute	Training courses for judges and	n/a

Country	Institution	Programs/degrees available	Program length
	(JTI)	magistrates on child protection and child rights issues.	
Mauritania	<i>Université de Nouakchott, Institut Universitaire Professionnel</i>	<i>Licence en travail social</i>	Two years of post-baccalaureate studies
Niger	<i>Ecole Nationale de la Santé Publique (ENSP)</i>	<i>Diplôme d'Assistant Social</i> <i>Diplôme de TSAS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three years of post-BEPC studies • Three years of post-baccalaureate studies
	<i>Ecole Nationale de Police (ENP)</i>	Coursework on child rights, child protection, and child-friendly policing integrated into national police training	n/a
Nigeria	Approximately 10 ten federal and state institutions, including Kaduna Polytechnic and the Federal School of Social Work, overseen by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE)	<p>National Diploma (ND) in social development</p> <p>National Innovation Diploma (NID) in early childhood care management</p> <p>Higher National Diploma (HND) programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HND social development (social welfare option) • HND social development (home economics option) • HND social development (community development option) • HND social development (youth and sport option) 	ND programs are two-year programs while HND programs are three-years.
	Federal School of Social Work	Certification in Social Work (paraprofessional scheme)	Eight weeks
	Afe Babalola University, College of Social and Management Sciences, Department of Media, Communication and Social	Bachelors in sociology and social work	Four years

Country	Institution	Programs/degrees available	Program length
	Studies		
	Fountain University Department of Psychology and Sociology	Bachelors in social work and administration	Four years
	University of Jos, Department of Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma in social work for development • Bachelor of social work and social administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two years (diploma) • Four years (BSW)
	University of Lagos, Department of Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma in social development and administration • Bachelors in social work (through entrance exam) • PhD in social work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two years (diploma) • Four years through entrance exam or three years through direct entry (BSW) • Variable (PhD)
	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Bachelors in social work and community development	Four years after entrance exam or three years through direct entry
	Nigeria Police Force (NFP), Department of Training	Coursework on child-friendly policing integrated into curriculum	
Senegal	<i>Ecole Nationale des Travailleurs Sociaux Spécialisés (ENTSS)</i>	Diploma in social work with six possible specializations : 1) community social work; 2) social work and business; 3) social work and family mediation; 4) social work for child rights; 5) family and community mediation; and 6) social work for the reintegration of disabled persons	Three years (first year general social work curriculum and second two years specialization)
		Advanced diploma	Three years
	<i>Ecole Nationale d'Administration et Magistrature (ENAM)</i>	Diploma in social work for child protection <i>educateurs specializes</i> (this course was taught at the ENTSS until 2010)	Three years (but the courses have not actually started yet and would rely heavily on the curriculum and staff of ENTSS to deliver the general social work curriculum)

Country	Institution	Programs/degrees available	Program length
	<i>Centre de Formation Judiciaire</i> (CFJ)	Special program to promote the legal protection of minors for national police, military, and academic training agencies	
	<i>Ecole Nationale de Police</i> (ENP)	Coursework on child-friendly policing integrated into curriculum	
Sierra Leone	National Training Center (NTC)	Diploma in social work	18 months

Table 5 demonstrates tremendous variability in the formal social work training programs available throughout the region. One key distinction lies between social work programs run by the government in order to prepare civil servants for their work (including almost all institutions in French-speaking countries as well as the School of Social Work program in Ghana and the NTBE programs in Nigeria) and university-based programs. Some regional-level key respondents indicated that government-run training institutes were more likely to be practical in preparing their students for community-level work than university-based institutes, which tended to be more theoretical. The field data collected for this study, however, did not necessarily support that assertion. In Ghana, for example, although students valued the training they received at the institute level, they often felt a need for more comprehensive training at the university level, and enrolled in the Bachelor's Degree program at the University of Ghana. Moreover, students in both Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire often already had university training despite such training not being required for their entry to the government-run training institutes. Having received training in both kinds of settings, they noted that the classroom-based training that they received through both universities and through training institutes were similar in nature although in both countries they unanimously expressed appreciation for the internships that they undertook through the government-run training institutes.

It is notable that PhD programs in social work exist in the region only in Ghana and Nigeria, both English-speaking countries. Study respondents in both countries indicated that these PhD programs were in their early stages. In Ghana, the PhD program at the University of Ghana began in 2011 and has grown steadily in scope and focus since that time. In Nigeria, the PhD program appeared to be relatively informal for the time being, and study respondents indicated that those wishing to pursue a PhD in social work did so either in the global North or online with a Western-based institution.

Among French-speaking countries, only Senegal and Burkina Faso offered higher-level training beyond the initial three-year training program. For this reason, both countries' training institutes provided training for students from Francophone countries throughout the region (Niger, Benin, Chad, Togo, and others) who wished to pursue superior-level studies.

Taken together, these programs represent a tremendous—and growing—variety of programs, and an undeniable groundswell of training programs throughout the region can be felt. The sheer number of training programs available in Nigeria is notable although this quantity is perhaps parallel to the country's large population.

2) A core challenge for training and professional development is that social workers' job descriptions and legal mandate are unclear in most countries throughout the region. Through the document compilation that constituted the first phase of this research, representatives of only two countries (Burkina Faso and Benin) were able to share clear job descriptions or profiles for social workers. The additional fieldwork also revealed that the lack of clarity about the social work profession was a frequent frustration for social workers and administrators at all levels.

The “gold standard” for clear job descriptions in the region emanate from Burkina Faso in what are commonly called the *TOS*, shorthand for *textes d'organisation des emplois spécifiques*.¹⁰

¹⁰ See *Décret n°2004-195/PRES/PM/MFPRE/MFB/MASSN du 12 mai 2004 portant organisation*

Coming into force by ministerial decree in 2004, these orientations provide not only the academic qualifications required for various levels of social workers in the country and the administrative grade but also detailed descriptions of the tasks expected of each level of social worker.

Other countries—such as Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Niger, and Senegal—do have governmental decrees or laws that lay out the qualifications required for various levels of social worker from an administrative vantage. For example, Senegal has a decree organizing the functioning of the Ministry of Justice and the work of the *éducateurs spécialisés*. It is notable, however, that the accompanying job roles and responsibilities in these countries are either embryonic or non-existent. During the fieldwork in Côte d’Ivoire, for example, several respondents indicated that the law establishing the administrative levels of social workers dates from the 1950s and has not been revisited or completed in the 60+ years since the law’s passage.¹¹ Human resource documents obtained from Benin and Niger similarly indicated varying levels of social workers and their administrative classifications and educational requirements, but their “attributions” (or roles and responsibilities) are either exceptionally vague or non-existent.

Education spécialisée: one concept, many paths

The presence of *éducateurs spécialisés* occurs in several French-speaking WCA countries although core divergences in tasks and training appear among countries. Taking three examples—Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, and Senegal—one can see the myriad forms that the concept takes throughout the region. In Burkina Faso, *éducateurs spécialisés* are trained at the social work training institute and fulfill several specialized roles, such as working with children in conflict with the law and working with people with physical and mental disabilities. In Côte d’Ivoire, however, two schools train *éducateurs spécialisés*: the INFS, which trains them to work with people with disabilities, and the ENAM, which trains those *éducateurs spécialisés* who will work with children in conflict with the law. Senegal provides a third example in which *éducateurs spécialisés* are trained at the ENAM to work with children in conflict with the law but are increasingly taking on specialized case management within the social welfare system more broadly. What unites the concepts of *éducateurs spécialisés* in all three settings is the notion that this form of work reaches “beyond” general social work, requiring advanced training for specific circumstances and vulnerabilities. Nonetheless, the divergence in understandings and uses of the concept reveals that there is not a common regional understanding of this component of social work, even among French-speaking countries.

The legal framework that would govern the social work profession in both Ghana and Nigeria remains unfinished in the form of draft laws that have yet to be passed despite years of advocacy by in-country social work associations. In both countries, laws to clarify and situate the boundaries of the social work profession in Ghana and Nigeria have been in the development stages for many years, but have not yet been passed. This lack of a legal framework for the social

des emplois spécifiques du Ministère de l’Action Sociale et de la Solidarité Nationale (JO N°22 DU 27 MAI 2004).

¹¹ The text of the law was requested from several respondents during the fieldwork in Côte d’Ivoire, but none of them were able to locate a copy of the law itself.

work profession creates ambiguity concerning the role of social workers as well as the relationship between social workers, NGO workers, and others. This lack of clear objectives for the social work profession has profound implications for social work training; in essence, this gap will need to be addressed before efforts to revise social work curricula should be undertaken.

Just as importantly, this lack of a framework for the social work profession has a profound effect on the ways that social workers perceive their role in society. Across all countries, the data revealed that although social workers were often frustrated with the means available to them to undertake their work, they had a clear sense of mission and were able to readily describe their daily tasks in very specific ways. In Senegal, social workers expressed frustration when given cases that they had no resources to support and no services for which to refer them to, especially when they were clearly in need of social or financial assistance. In one social welfare center in Burkina Faso, social workers were divided into teams with specific tasks: the Office for Child and Adolescent Promotion worked with families to ensure children's schooling and positive upbringing in a family environment while the Office for Family Promotion and Specialized Social Services dealt with discrete cases of abuse, violence, and exploitation that were referred to them. The Office for Promoting Solidarity identified government and non-government resources for extremely poor families and families affected by natural disasters such as floods while two final offices (the Administrative and Financial Office and the Statistics Office) performed more administrative tasks. These workers felt themselves to be embedded in their communities and able to work easily with mothers, fathers, and children in the areas that they served.

Fieldwork in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire revealed similar frustrations with the financial means available to social workers, but the social workers and social work students interviewed in those countries also expressed additional concerns about the lack of clarity about their roles. In Ghana, social work students reported concern over a national hiring freeze on government employees, including social workers, that prohibits recruitment unless it replaces staff who have retired or passed away. As such, employment opportunities for newly graduating social workers are primarily limited to the NGO sector, and that in many cases those without formal social work training are hired to fill available positions in light of the lack of recognition nationally for the unique nature of the social work profession. In Senegal, a similar situation exists, particularly for students who will join the Ministry of Justice as *Educateurs Specialises*. In fact there was a protest by students during the research process and the course for *Educateurs Specialises*, which was transferred in 2010 to the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration et Magistrature*, has not yet taken in a new cohort of students. In Nigeria, social work students indicated that they had little clarity about what their roles after graduation would ensue and shared that they were considered "losers" for having chosen social work as a profession. Social work students, administrators, and teachers in Côte d'Ivoire uniformly expressed frustration at the lack of clarity about their role in society; one high-level administrator indicated that social work should be at the heart of national development but that the country's outdated laws establishing the social work profession resulted in low visibility in the national development agenda. "We should be at the heart of national development, but nobody knows who we are," he explained, adding that the relatively low educational levels of social workers hindered administrators with social work training to advance higher in the government infrastructure.

Finally, the general lack of clarity of the role of the social worker in society creates a situation in which the overlap between government social workers and NGO workers is highly contested.

3) The trainings for NGO workers, CBO workers, and other paraprofessional social workers that were analyzed for this study indicate that these workers outside of the government social work training schemes are—with some notable exceptions—conducted in a largely short-term and issue-focused manner. According to both the training modules reviewed during Phase I of the research as well as the group discussions and interviews conducted with these workers during Phase II, training at this level is almost always very short (typically three to five days and only very rarely more than one week).

The variety of topics covered reveals an issue-based approach to social work and to child protection. The most common topics covered were: children's rights (basic modules on the Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC] and occasionally the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Children [ACRWC]); gender-based violence, or GBV; identifying and caring for orphans and vulnerable children, or OVC; child trafficking; HIV and AIDS; child protection in emergency situations (including family tracing and reunification, or FTR); and child labor. Only in rare instances did NGO and CBO workers receive any training in basic social work principles or approaches. Although the workers expressed appreciation for such short trainings, they also expressed clear frustration that they were receiving training in order to conduct specific tasks on behalf of international NGOs and UN and government agencies. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, one representative exclaimed,

They train us on issues related to their needs, not issues that we have felt in our communities. We received training in good governance from USAID; their approach did not reflect the reality here in Côte d'Ivoire. Their trainings also do not help us to become strong organizations; they want us to remain weak.

In Senegal, a draft curriculum for “front-line” workers in child protection has been developed in collaboration with the ENTSS. The handbook for trainers is designed to deliver a five-day course on child protection.

In the countries where fieldwork was conducted, the relationship between NGO and CBO workers and professional, governmental social workers showed evidence of inequality and often tension. In Burkina Faso and Nigeria, for example, governmental social workers often talked about NGO and CBO workers as being unqualified and as claiming the title of “social workers” inappropriately. In one site in Burkina Faso, the government social workers spoke of working through NGOs in order to reach OVCs for school kit distribution. For their part, NGO and CBO workers in that country did not necessarily think of government social workers as a resource for them to turn to. Although a number of NGO and CBO workers were enrolled in a fee-based, year-long night-course (a shortened version of the two-year training for government social workers), they admittedly were taking the course in the hopes of integrating the national civil service rather than to strengthen their skills in their current organizations. In Côte d'Ivoire, government social workers “coordinate” and “supervise” local NGOs and CBOs through OVC platforms, convening bodies of the organizations providing the series of core supports to HIV-affected children and families through the USAID-funded PEPFAR program. Consequently,

most of the trainings that these workers had received were related to HIV and AIDS, including voluntary counseling and testing, care and support for OVCs, positive living, and the like. One NGO manager spoke of the “HIV-ification of social work” in Côte d’Ivoire. The region-wide ISS trainings for workers in residential institutions for children are reportedly quite comprehensive in their approach to children’s care and protection, but it is notable that they are being conducted, for now, only for a specific subset of workers.

Tensions concerning perceptions of social work between government and non-government social service workers were most apparent in Nigeria, where a USAID-sponsored program to develop a six-month “paraprofessional social worker curriculum” has been implemented in recent years under the aegis of broader OVC programming and social service workforce strengthening. Offered as a Certificate in Social Work the Federal School of Social Work in Enugu in conjunction with the American Health Alliance, this paraprofessional training program has attracted significant attention in recent years. The program’s adherents point out that the paraprofessionals who complete the program are filling a much-needed gap in local-level service provision and consider the program a flagship one for the region. An analysis of the curriculum would indicate that it is relatively comprehensive and grounded in a relatively robust understanding of social work theory. The program, however, has several high-level detractors among government agencies as well as international and UN agencies working in Nigeria. One key respondent suggested, perhaps erroneously, that—if and when the draft bill to establish the social work profession in Nigeria comes into law—these paraprofessionals would cease to exist as they would not be qualified to undertake social work. Another respondent from an international agency stated unequivocally that the development and implementation of the paraprofessional training scheme was happening outside of broader national discussions about strengthening the national child protection and family welfare system in Nigeria.

4) The appropriateness and relevance of training curricula to cultural contexts vary across the region but are—in general—perceived to be inadequately adapted to local realities. In some countries, notably Burkina Faso, social workers generally find their training to be extremely relevant to their daily practice; this finding is in all likelihood linked to the fact that the INFTS has a structured, ongoing process of curriculum review that brings a broad range of stakeholders to the table. In the other countries where fieldwork was conducted, however, social workers expressed that their training was too theoretical or too rooted in social work practice in Europe and North America. In Ghana, for example, social work professors noted strongly that—despite the “indigenization” process that the School of Social Work applied to its curriculum in recent years—the coursework is too heavily influenced by social work practice in the United Kingdom and the USA to be relevant to Ghanaian realities. Faculty at the University of Ghana noted that they adapt the curricula to the local context on their own, but described a need for additional formal training materials and other resources that address the unique nature of the social work context in Ghana and the region. In Nigeria, social workers describing their daily work were uniformly unable to cite examples of training or coursework that they used when faced with daily decision-making. In Côte d’Ivoire, social workers were able to cite a few examples of relevant coursework but indicated that their practice of social work drew primarily upon their experiences during internship and upon their collective common sense as they took decisions together at social welfare centers.

Likewise, NGO and CBO workers consulted in all countries demonstrated that the short-term trainings that they had received were driven by the priorities of the international agencies that provided the trainings, not in local realities, as noted above. This finding was corroborated by the document review in which very few examples of culturally adapted training materials for workers at all levels.

Table 6 compiles information, where available, about the total numbers of known government social workers in the countries covered by the study as well as the number of social work students trained each year. Following the table, the subsequent sections provide additional information about training programs available in each country covered by the study before turning to more in-depth analysis of the elements contained in the pedagogy matrix.

Table 6: Number of government social workers and social work students per country compared to total population

Country	Total population, 2012 (Source: World Bank)	Number of government social workers, 2011 (Source: Child Frontiers and fieldwork for this study)	Ratio of government social workers to population	Estimation of social work graduates annually at training institutes
Benin	10.05 million	722 social workers and auxiliaries (incomplete qualifications but in service)	1: 13,919 (rank: 2/9)	Unknown
Burkina Faso	16.46 million	2,469 social affairs officers (including pre-school educators); ~ 1,650 excluding pre-school educators	1 : 9,976 (rank: 1/9)	~200 at INFTS <i>Ecole des Cadres Moyens</i> in any given year (excluding pre-school education)
Cameroon	21.7 million	1,307 social affairs officers	1: 16, 602 (rank: 4/9)	n/a
Côte d'Ivoire	19.84 million	629 social workers; over 1,300 whose recruitment into the civil service is being negotiated	1 : 31,542 (rank: 5/9)	~300 at INFS in any given year (excluding pre-school education)
Ghana	25.37 million	750 social welfare officers; hiring freeze has kept this number stable	1 : 33,826 (rank: 6/9)	~150 at School of Social Work (including large percentage in "sandwich program")
Niger	17.16 million	91 social affairs officers	1 : 188,571 (rank: 9/9)	Unknown
Nigeria	168.8 million	~12,000 social workers (estimated)	1 : 14,067 (rank: 3/9)	Unknown
Senegal	13.73 million	352 social affairs officers	1 : 39,005 (rank: 7/9)	~250 at ENTSS in any given year
Sierra Leone	5.979 million	~80 social welfare officers	1 : 74,138 (rank: 8/9)	n/a

Additional Analysis of Degrees and Training Programs by Country

In the case of **Benin**, formal training in social work began in the 1970s with current programs at the *Ecole Supérieure des Assistants Sociaux* (ESAS). Three training programs are available at ESAS, including a program in Social Administration, which trains those who will then have the title *Administrateur de l'Action Sociale*, the highest level of social work training at the national level. The program requires five years of post-baccalaureate training, including three years at ESAS followed by two years at the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature* (ENAM). The second program offered by ESAS includes a Baccalaureate Degree in Social Action (for those will have the title *Technicien Supérieur de l'Action Sociale* [TSAS]), which is designed to be followed during three years of study at ESAS and equips students to serve as heads of *Centres de Promotion Sociale*, or CPS. The third program trains those who will then have the status of *Contrôleur de l'Action Sociale* (CAS), which requires students to have an initial certificate of study before completing three years of training at ESAS. Upon completing the CAS degree, individuals are able to conduct work in the community under the supervision of those with a TSAS degree. As such, programs in Benin provide social work professionals with training to function at a range of levels. In addition, the National Police School (*Ecole Nationale de Police* [ENP]) includes modules on child protection and child rights, with specialized curricula that are used to train various levels of police as well as peacekeepers and other security personnel. Within Benin, an inter-agency collaboration exists at the national level to provide government employees with pre-service training and continuing education opportunities. Programs examined in the mapping report included those ranging from one to five days, which were primarily theoretical in nature, emphasizing international child rights and child protection issues rather than areas of practice. The country's *Ministère de la Famille, des Affaires Sociales, de la Solidarité Nationale, des Handicapés et des Personnes de Troisième Age* developed a staff training plan for 2011-2013 in order to focus on key areas of capacity building, such as prevention and response efforts related to particular protection risks as well as financial management and administration. Although this research was unable to reveal to what extent that capacity-building plan was funded and implemented, the country's 2011 mapping indicated that the Ministry was only spending its annual budget at a fraction at the amount of the approved budget due to administrative blockages in accessing the funding.¹² It is notable nonetheless that Benin has a relatively high number of trained social workers—when those workers whose qualifications are incomplete but who are nonetheless in civil service posts—relative to population (see Table 6).

In **Burkina Faso**, the *Institut National de Formation en Travail Social* (INFTS) is the National Institute of Social Work Education, established in 2005. The INFTS houses both the *Ecole des Cadres Moyens*, which graduates over 300 people per years (200+ of whom are focused on social welfare issues) and the *Ecole des Cadres Supérieurs*, the latter being the higher-level training institute for students who have completed the former and a number of years of work. The three areas of training available—at three levels for each area—are social assistance, specialized education, and pre-school education. The Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity (*Ministre de l'Action Sociale et de la Solidarité Nationale*) is the central government ministry involved in social welfare, and the INFTS is an autonomous entity linked to the MASSN. Some

¹² See Child Frontiers (2011), “*Cartographie et Analyse du Système de Protection de l'Enfant au Bénin.*” UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan International.

students come from neighboring Francophone countries, including Niger, Chad, and Benin. The Ministry, along with the INFTS and the in-country child protection working group (*Groupe de Travail pour la Protection de l'Enfance*) developed a three-year training plan on child protection issues for the period 2012-2013 (*Plan Spécifique de Formation des Travailleurs Sociaux et Autres Intervenants en Matière de Protection de l'Enfance: 2012-2014*), targeting in-service police, health workers, judicial and legal officials, as well as other actors involved in child protection. This initiative is also being carried out with the support of UNICEF and has a target of providing 30 training sessions to 750 individuals over a three-year period. NGO and CBO workers contributing to the social service workforce in Burkina Faso come from a variety of backgrounds but generally have much lower education levels than their counterparts in the government. When asked what kind of training they had received, they listed a wide range of one-day to two-week long trainings (most being three to five days) including: children's rights; trafficking; HIV and AIDS (including voluntary counseling and testing); microfinance; child labor; female genital mutilation; and other assorted trainings, such as vegetable drying and gardening. While most workers had participated in at least one training, there was a noticeable diversity in the number of trainings that people had attended, with some having attended up to eight or ten.

Historically, training support available for social workers in **Cameroon** has been strong, leading to a ratio of social workers that is much higher than other countries. Unfortunately, today the key institutions for teaching social work in Cameroon are closed. In the past, social workers were trained in two public schools. The first was the *Ecole de Formation des Educateurs Assistants Sociaux*, which became the *Ecole Nationale des Educateurs Assistants Sociaux*, then the *Ecole Nationale des Assistants des Affaires Sociales*. The INTS (*Institut National de Travail Social*) has not yet opened its doors since a law promoted its inception in 2006. However, Cameroon's newly established National Association of Social Workers is working to reinforce social work capacity in the country. Cameroon faces several challenges in this regard. First, financial resources allocated to social affairs are dramatically lower compared to those allocated to other social sectors (such as health and education). Secondly, human resources for child protection are strongly concentrated in urban areas. Finally, the closing of the social work training schools has created a vacuum that must be filled. When the INTS opens, the foreseen training programs are the following (lengths unknown):

- A social services program, leading to a diploma to be an *Assistant de Service Social*;
- A specialized social services program, leading to a diploma for *Educateur Social Spécialisé*;
- A higher-level training cycle for specialized work, leading to a diploma for *Etudes Professionnelles Approfondies en Travail Social*; and finally
- In-service trainings at the certificate level.

Côte d'Ivoire has a body of professionals from different social work specializations in the field and also in management. A child protection survey reported that 40% of frontline child protection workers were social workers. The same survey found 94 social workers working centrally with the MFFAS, with an additional 1560 social workers in the regional offices. These numbers indicate the vital role of social workers in the country. There is currently one school in Côte d'Ivoire that trains social workers, the *Institut National de la Formation Sociale* (INFS); its

academic programs do not include a specific module addressing child protection issues although there are modules on orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and children's rights. The INFS offers a three-year training for social workers, followed by a two-year training for special educators. About 500 students per year complete the INFS curricula, of whom approximately 300 are in the fields outside of pre-school education. Therefore, the INFS generates a great national resource contributing to the protection and welfare of children and their families. NGO and CBO workers in Côte d'Ivoire described a variety of trainings—similar in nature to those conducted in Burkina Faso—in which they had participated, including: GBV; OVC identification and support; HIV and AIDS (including voluntary counseling and testing and positive living); children's rights; and good governance. The literature review also revealed trainings conducted by international agencies on FTR, psychosocial support, and child participation. Operating under the auspices of the government social welfare centers through the OVC platforms, NGOs and CBOs in Côte d'Ivoire expressed relatively strong dissatisfaction with the training that they had received and their relationship to government social workers.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, in 2012, there were extensive UNICEF-funded child protection trainings throughout the country for the DRC government's Division of Social Affairs (DIVAS) staff. However, the research team currently has received little additional information available about the state of social work education in the country.

In **Ghana**, the Ghana Association of Social Workers is the national body of social service professionals, and is a member of the International Federation of Social Workers. This association includes those with formal training in social work, as well as practitioners from other backgrounds who are involved in social service provision. Opening up the association beyond the scope of formally-trained social workers has created tension between those who support this arrangement and those who feel that only those with university degrees in Social Work should be included. Currently, there is not a social work licensing body within Ghana, and the need to establish a national licensing system for social workers was consistently described as a strong priority by respondents who were interviewed during the field visit. The University of Ghana offers a 4-year Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, along with two graduate programs in social work, including a 2-year Master's of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree and a Doctor's of Philosophy (PhD). The University of Ghana previously had a 2-year Diploma program in Social Work, although is currently phasing this program out. In order to promote a more practice-based degree, the University of Ghana is also in the process of developing a Masters of Social Work (MSW) program, which will also be a 2-year graduate degree program. The government-sponsored School of Social Work, which offers a 2-year diploma program, has historically served as the training institute for government social workers. In addition to the standard program, increased interest has led to the creation of a "sandwich" program for working professionals, which enables students to attend the program in a compressed time period and while still maintaining their current post of employment. A 4-year Bachelor's Degree in Social Work is also available at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, although the program is new and has not yet seen its first graduates. Respondents during the field visit reported that other schools, such as Methodist College and Mount Crest College, are currently seeking to establish degree programs in Social Work. UNICEF has provided trainings for NGO staff and other social service professionals on a variety of social work and child protection issues. Local NGOs and development agencies have implemented in-service trainings on particular issues such as domestic violence, trafficking, foster care, and working with orphans and vulnerable children

(OVC). The need to promote harmonization between the context of NGO trainings and certain national and international laws became apparent during the field visit, as certain agencies were providing training on issues of foster care and adoption that conflicted with established child protection standards and professional standards of care regarding these issues. During the field visit, the need for additional training for police and law enforcement officials on child protection issues was emphasized. Although laws pertaining to child protection issues are covered as part of the standard curriculum in the police academy, respondents described a need for more in-depth training on child protection issues. A Judicial Training Institute (JTI) was established to provide training to judges and magistrates on child protection and child rights issues. Some school-based trainings have also focused on the prevention of violence in schools (see mapping report). As of 2011, the Social Welfare Department was represented in every district in Ghana, including 750 personnel, in addition to 490 employees providing other support services. This includes 550 professional social workers, 139 technical staff, and 71 child care workers. As mentioned above, a national hiring freeze of government employees has prevented the expansion of existing social work units and has left existing social work offices often short-staffed.

In the case of **Liberia**, documents examined in this review were primarily those developed by NGOs and UN agencies to address particular child protection issues, with gender-based violence (GBV) being the most commonly mentioned. Trainings targeted a variety of audiences, ranging from community-based groups to specialized modules for police and other legal and judicial officials. Currently, only one formal academic program exists in social work, a bachelor's degree at a small private university; however, a new initiative is underway by the Liberia Program Learning Group (PLG) under the auspices of the University of Liberia and in conjunction with Cuttington University and United Methodist University to establish a post-graduate Certificate Program in child protection, which is scheduled to launch in September 2014 and is intended to eventually become a specialization within a social work diploma program. Discussions are underway for the eventual development of Bachelor's and Master's Degree programs in Social Work, expected to launch at the two latter universities above in September 2014, and the Certificate program will be the first to be implemented.

The *Université de Nouakchott* in **Mauritania** offers a *Licence en travail social à l'Institut Universitaire Professionnel*.

According to national requirements in **Niger**, social workers must receive training in either social welfare, psychology, or sociology. The National School of Public Health (*Ecole Nationale de la Santé Publique* [ENSP]) offers courses in social assistance. These classes do not specifically mention child protection; however, they do address notions of "childhood" based on international child rights concepts. In addition, the courses discuss juvenile justice and other general social welfare issues. In addition, the ENSP offers a Technical Diploma in Social Action (*Diplôme de Technicien Supérieur de l'Action Sociale* [TSAS]), which is a three-year post-*baccalauréat* program consisting of academic training and field-based internships. In addition, a degree in social assistance is available, which is also a three-year program following the completion of a BEPC (junior high school level, one diploma before the *baccalauréat*). Programs in Sociology and Psychology are offered at the *Université de Niamey*. Both programs offer individual courses related to childhood studies although there is not a specific concentration related to child protection, child welfare, social work, or related areas. Students can, however, focus on social and health service management or pedagogical psychology, and so target their

program towards social work or child protection issues in one of these ways. Beginning in 2008, training on child protection was incorporated as part of the standard curriculum at the *Ecole Nationale de Police*. Niger is also among the countries participating in a multi-country training program for military and security forces being implemented by the International Bureau for Children's Rights, Save the Children, and UNICEF. Training for legal and judicial officials is offered through the *Programme de Protection Judiciaire Juvénile* (PJJ), overseen by the Ministry of Justice, which provides training on child protection issues with a particular emphasis on addressing the needs of children who come in contact with the law. However, child protection is not included in standard legal curricula or training for judges and magistrates. According to the mapping report, there are an estimated 77 civil servants who are dedicated social work professionals employed by the Ministry of Public Service and Work (*Ministère de la Fonction Publique et du Travail*). In addition, the Ministry employs an estimated 14 technical assistants who work alongside child protection staff in various capacities. Working with a population of nearly 20 million people, the social work workforce in Niger is therefore extremely small.

In **Nigeria**, the exact number of trained social workers and auxiliary (paraprofessional) social workers is unknown, though there is mobilization around determining this number in the near future. Based on the numbers of registered social workers, the number is likely higher than 12,000, but this number does not include paraprofessional (auxiliary) social workers and others engaged in social work activities, many of whom are engaged in child protection work. There are numerous universities offering Bachelor's and Master's degrees in social work (see Table 5), the curricula of which is overseen by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in Kaduna. These institutions offer a National Diploma (ND), which lasts 2 years, and a Higher National Diploma (HND), which lasts an additional 2 years after the ND. The NBTE developed the ND curriculum, which was last reviewed in 1995. (There is no electronic version of this curriculum available, so the content has not yet been reviewed.) The HND includes four options of social development that students may choose from: (1) social welfare, (2) community development, (3) home economics, and (4) youth and sport. The NBTE also sponsors a National Innovative Diploma on Early Childhood Care Management, as well as certificate programs that are held for 3, 6, and 9 months. There are other certificate, diploma and Masters programs, but they are all unregulated. Nigeria is currently developing a training program for auxiliary social workers. The training will last eight weeks, after which participants will be given the option to complete additional training certificates. A promising development in Nigeria is the bill put forth by the National Association of Social Workers to professionalize social work activities. The bill has not yet been adopted, but it is anticipated to go before the National Parliament in the summer of 2014. If adopted, is anticipated to impact positively the development of social work in the country.

In **Senegal**, there is a rich history of formal training in social work, which began in the 1960's. Currently, training is provided by the *Ministre de l'Action Sociale et de la Solidarité Nationale* (MASSN), which through the *Ecole Nationale des Travailleurs Sociaux Spécialisés* (ENTSS) offers a three-year diploma in social work as well as a higher degree in social work to students selected through a competitive process. According to the 2011 child protection mapping report, *Cartographie et Analyse des Systèmes de Protection de l'Enfance au Senegal*, in 2010, approximately 1,200 individuals applied for this program, and only 30 were admitted. Approximately 250 students are enrolled annually in the diploma course and 60-70 in the higher degree program. The undergraduate program provides a core curriculum in social work, as well

as an area of specialization. Available specializations include: 1) community social work; 2) social work and business; 3) social work and family mediation; 4) social work for the protection of child rights; 5) family and community mediation and 6) social work for the reintegration of disabled persons. The mapping report notes that although the curricula for these programs are developed by national teachers, they are heavily influenced by international standards. Until 2010, the training of *Educateurs Specialise*, who work on child protection within the justice sector, was also carried out at the ENTSS. In 2010 this was transferred to the ENAM, but courses have not yet started. It should be noted that this increased emphasis on justice within case management may not be the most useful for the development of social work in Senegal, particularly given the limited resources within the country. There is also no accreditation process for social workers in Senegal. For judicial officials, training on juvenile justice is incorporated into the standard curriculum at the *Centre de Formation Judiciaire* (CFJ). A special program to promote the legal protection of minors was established in 2002 by a collaboration of national police, military, and academic training agencies. The program focuses on child rights, juvenile justice, as well as the psychosocial needs of children in contact with the law. According to the 2011 mapping report, the government employs an estimated 352 social service professionals at the national level, with approximately 75% located at the central level. Of those working at the central level, an estimated 14% are dedicated to child protection issues. The mapping report also found that child protection actors are also comprised of a large volunteer base, which commonly does not have extensive training or credentials.

According to UNICEF, there are currently 42 social workers employed by the Ministry of Social Welfare in **Sierra Leone**, representing a major human resources challenge to the country's capacity to address child protection issues. The professional social workers were previously trained at the National Training Center (NTC), which was established in the late 1970s to serve as the premier institution for in-service training courses for social development workers at certificate level. The courses were designed in such way to serve the middle level manpower in specialized social work and aligned to the core functions and mandate for the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, Non-State Actors and other development partners. Trainees were serving mainly at the community and chiefdom levels. The training program was in two parts: theoretical classroom studies of 12 months, and practical field work of 6 months. The subjects taught were: (1) Communication Skills, (2) Administrative Skills, (3) Community Development Planning and Implementation, (4) Group Dynamics, (5) Water and Sanitation, (6) Technical Construction Skills (feeder roads construction, box culverts, VIP latrines, etc.). At the end of the 18 months training, certificates were offered which facilitated the absorption of those belonging to the Ministry into the permanent and pensionable grade of the public service. Also, the NTC was a venue for shorter term refresher courses and seminars/workshops organized by the Ministry and its partners. The NTC was closed during the civil war in Sierra Leone and was reopened this year with support from UNWOMEN. Though they are employed by the Ministry of Social Welfare, the functions and roles of the current 42 social workers in Sierra Leone varies depending on which local council they work with. There are also 30 "volunteer" social workers, who were trained in recent years on an *ad hoc* basis by NGOs. These volunteer social workers have been practicing for the past 20 years and are often the focal point for community child-protection issues. Efforts are being made to review the role of volunteer social workers, especially those who are focal points for child protection in the community and to give them a wider role so they can coordinate with the professional social workers, especially given that there are not enough professional social workers in the country. The Ministry of Social Welfare plans

to train the 30 volunteer social workers in order to replace the professional social workers, many of whom will be retiring soon. The Ministry intends to re-commence social work training at the NTC starting in January 2014, using a previously developed curriculum. The NTC aims to train 200 social work students per year (100 in the certificate program, 50 in the diploma program, and 50 in the advanced diploma program). UNICEF is currently working with Save the Children to evaluate this previously developed curriculum and make recommendations to revise it. Another positive step in Sierra Leone is the National Child Welfare Policy, which is soon to be endorsed at the federal level. Though it is considered by some to be vague, it will provide a framework for training social workers in child protection.

Analysis of Theory, Research, Policy, and Practice

Once general information on available programs had been identified, the next step in the study involved examining the materials based on the four primary areas reflected in the *Pedagogy Matrix: 1) Theory; 2) Research; 3) Policy; and 4) Practice*. For each of these areas, attention was given to the ways in which these concepts were incorporated in various programs and training initiatives, as well as the similarities and differences that emerged between various approaches. In addition, this exercise was used to identify gaps in existing approaches and areas for future research and capacity building. This exercise was also used to identify areas for follow-up during in-country field visits during the second phase of this study.

Theory

With regard to the issue of *theory*, documents included in this review were examined in order to determine (1) how theory (including approaches and frameworks) was incorporated into particular curricula and training programs and (2) the theoretical approaches to teaching and learning.

Generally speaking, the social worker training available at social work institutes and universities appropriately benefits from a broad range of theories emanating from psychology, sociology, the law, and other disciplines. Given the relatively limited number of training institutes and departments within universities, there are no schools that specialize in one theoretical approach as happens at Western universities, where students hoping to specialize in one approach as opposed to another might select a specific university. Rather, professors bring in theoretical concepts as needed for individual courses. With a handful of exceptions, training for NGO and CBO workers is clearly quite scattershot, or random and haphazard in scope, bringing together wide-ranging topics proposed by a variety of international NGOs but not long enough to delve fully into the theories underpinning the topics. These trainings were always short (three to five days, never more than two weeks with the exception of the paraprofessional social worker training in Nigeria) and based on the topics proposed by international NGOs rather than skills-building needs as expressed by the NGO or CBO workers themselves.

Across all of the countries where fieldwork was conducted, study respondents indicated that a core theoretical approach that underscored their work was a strengths-based or assets approach,

related to resiliency theory; social workers are trained to identify their clients' social, emotional, and economic assets and to build upon these to help those with whom they are working to solve their own problems. In two of the Francophone countries where fieldwork was conducted (Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire), social workers and social work students also highlighted two core concepts that they particularly appreciated. The first was the concept of "the professional secret," or confidentiality, as an approach to social work that allowed them to build trust with their clients and that distinguished them from other social service providers who might not be aware of the importance of confidentiality. In Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal, respondents also indicated that their core social work curriculum of individual social work, group social work, and community social work provided them with a helpful framework for understanding their work and approaches to undertaking it. They reported that the core coursework in individual social work was especially helpful for talking to clients while community social work provided them with awareness-raising techniques for broader community work. In Ghana, social work students also described the role of systems theory in their training, which focuses on the "micro, meso, and macro" aspects of interaction between individuals and their larger communities. In addition, coursework also incorporated theories of psychology and child development.

Concerning child protection, many of the curricula for social workers in West and Central Africa contain coursework in child rights and child protection; these curricula are often modules that were introduced through partnerships with either UNICEF or Save the Children and emanate from a rights-based approach to child protection. Although this rights-based approach is a useful one, it does not seem that the rest of the social work curricula are squarely framed from a rights perspective, indicating that the child rights framework might be somewhat incongruent with other coursework. In Burkina Faso, the core curriculum for social workers also contains coursework in child development, typically taught by psychology professors. In Ghana, training for social workers at the University level has a strong rights-based component, while also focusing on child development and particular practice issues such as working with women, youth, and children.

Concerning pedagogical methods, classroom-based training appeared to be taught primarily through lecture rather than through more participatory approaches. Students in Burkina Faso specifically mentioned this pedagogical approach as a limitation of their training, indicating that although some practice was incorporated into their training (including group activities and internships, to be discussed below), they would have preferred to have more discussion-based training in the classroom.

Country-level analysis of theory in social work training

In **Benin**, the university curricula examined as part of this review is based on social work theory and social science principles, as well as training in health, legal, administration and management. According to the 2011 child protection mapping report, *Cartographie et Analyse du Système National de Protection de l'Enfant au Bénin*, optional seminars provide courses in child protection and child rights, although these courses are not required components of the curriculum. Training programs offered by the *Ecole Nationale de Police* also used a rights-based

approach, providing training on child protection and child rights issues for police and other security personnel. In addition, the mapping report found that NGOs, UN agencies and other actors provide trainings on particular issues, although these tend to be brief and do not cover broad issues related to intervention.

In **Burkina Faso**, the curricula of all academic programs examined as part of this review incorporated a range of theories, including child development, child psychology, psychopathology, child rights, and other key issues pertaining to particular areas of social welfare (HIV/AIDS, health and nutrition, violence and abuse, etc.). The core curriculum which all social work students study in their first year includes the three-part course of individual social work, group social work, and community social work, which currently working social workers all highlighted as a useful framework for their daily work. Many social workers also highlighted that coursework in the deontology of social work, and especially confidentiality, were extremely useful principles for their work.

In **Cameroon**, academic curricula were not available. In-service training documents, developed by UNICEF, NGOs, and others in collaboration with line Ministries, indicated a general trend towards a participatory approach to training. A document outlining a juvenile justice training for Magistrates, prison staff, and social workers (*Evaluation of juvenile justice training*, n.d.) integrated theoretical content such as theories of rehabilitation, and principles of diversion, proportionality, and deprivation of liberty. Another document (*Projet d'organisation une session de formation de 25 intervenants sociaux du secteur public, des organisations de la société civile et des communes des départements et la prise en charge psychosociale des enfants en situation difficile* (2008/2012)) covers principles, strategies, and concepts of psychosocial care.

The curricula available for social work students in **Côte d'Ivoire** dates from 2000 and begins—as in Burkina Faso—with core coursework in individual social work, group social work, and community social work.¹³ The curricula's five general modules are quite disparate:

- Theory and practice of social intervention (including the three core courses as well as more general courses such as gender and development, rural social services, and the history and administration of social services in Côte d'Ivoire);
- The institutional framework for social action (which includes four courses: public law, private law, law for civil servants, and children's rights) – students and professors agreed that this module was too generalist;
- General culture (a catch-all category including English, first aid, social science research methods, management, communications and marketing, and administrative writing, among other topics);
- Human sciences, social and economic environment (containing basic coursework on sociology, psychology, child psychology, andragogy, economics, and statistics); and
- Socio-medical sciences (including a number of introductory courses on public health, pediatrics, tropical illness, HIV and AIDS, voluntary counseling and testing, orphans and vulnerable children [OVCs], psychiatry, and psychopathology, among others).

In **Ghana**, social work training programs examined during this review drew heavily on rights-based concepts, while also reflecting a range of theoretical concepts from sociology, psychology,

¹³ See INFS (2000).

and child development. A theme that was frequently reported throughout the field visit by university professors, students, and other respondents was the fact that there is a need for new books and other training materials that reflect the social work context in Ghana. The majority of existing materials were reported to be western-based, and reflect theories and issues pertaining to the US or Europe. While professors at the University of Ghana reported adapting their classes to reflect issues pertaining to the Ghana context, they mentioned the lack of Ghana-specific materials and resources as a gap and an area for needed capacity development. Students and practitioners also reflected this theme, and emphasized the need for the creation of new books and training materials, as well as modules that focus specifically on child protection issues and intervention strategies that are appropriate to the Ghana context.

A potentially significant opportunity for revising existing social work training materials and curricula can be seen in the new Child and Family Welfare Policy that is in the process of being finalized. This policy emphasizes community-based child protection mechanisms, and promotes the strengthening of community structures. There is significant momentum around this policy, and it was consistently described throughout the visit as an exciting development in terms of shaping the course of social welfare in Ghana. As these changes take place at the policy level, it will be a prime opportunity for formal social work training programs to incorporate these themes as well. A collaboration of NGOs along with UNICEF have developed a draft training guide for working with community groups, and additional training and sensitization efforts will be developed by the government once the new policy is ratified. Exploring ways to link these efforts with the University of Ghana, the School of Social Work, and other formal training programs will be particularly crucial in order to ensure that upcoming social workers are equipped to carry out practice that is in line with the new national community-strengthening approach.

In the case of **Liberia**, training materials from NGOs and UN agencies took a strong rights-based approach, drawing primarily from international human rights treaties and conventions. As mentioned, gender-based violence (GBV) was a focus of many of the trainings, and as such, content focused on the ways these issues are conceptualized according to international standards and guidance documents. In addition, these materials also used theories of gender, sex, power, and violence to describe the multiple factors that contribute to GBV and the ways in which these issues are informed by cultural and contextual issues. Trainings for police and judicial officials took a strong rights-based approach as well, also heavily emphasizing the national legal framework and available identification, reporting, and referral process for handling GBV cases. In all instances, training materials were also guided by theories of resilience, and the importance of using a strength-based approach with regard to survivors of violence was consistently emphasized in materials by UN agencies, government actors, and NGOs. Since the academic program in Child Protection at the University of Liberia is still in the formation stage, detailed information about the theoretical approaches that will be used in the curricula was not available at the time of this review. However, initial materials examined used a rights-based approach to child protection while also addressing the need to take an anthropological approach to understanding notions of childhood and protection, as local understandings often differ from those emphasized by international actors.

In **Niger**, the academic curricula are not available for review. As described in the 2011 mapping report *Cartographie et Analyse du Systeme de Protection de l'Enfant au Niger*, university programs considered as part of their review drew heavily on theories of psychology, sociology

and social welfare, as well as notions of childhood based on international human rights concepts. In addition, the courses discuss juvenile justice and other general social welfare issues. The trainings for police and security forces previously described, including the multi-country initiative being implemented by International Bureau for Children's Rights, Save the Children, and UNICEF (*Mandatory Training Programme on Children's Rights Within National Training Institutions for Defence and Security Forces in Niger, 2012*), drew heavily on legal theories as well as international child protection and child rights concepts.

In **Nigeria**, the academic curricula tend to have a strong sociological approach to theory. For example curricula in the National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) developed by the National Board for Technical Education uses diverse sociological theories ranging from constructivism to attachment theory, which is also a theoretical approach for the field of psychology. Nigeria's focus on sociological theories may be due to the types of instructors who are leading the courses, many of whom come from sociology, psychology or even computer science. There are very few instructors with a social work background teaching these courses in Nigeria; therefore, theory and approaches specific to social work (e.g., strengths-based approaches and the person-in-environment model) may be overlooked in trainings.

In **Senegal**, findings from the document review did not provide substantial information on the types of theories that guide training and capacity building efforts. However, the mapping study of Senegal notes that existing formal training programs are based heavily on international concepts of social work, child development, and child protection. Interviews with the teaching staff at the ENTSS and ENAM confirmed these findings. The Director of the ENTSS stated that the training was "founded in a rights based approach and the autonomy of the person", which also suggests an incongruence with local norms of community cohesion over individual rights. In Senegal, there are strong partnerships with Universities in Canada and France who offer seminars and opportunities for teaching staff to improve their theoretical knowledge. Training for legal, security, and law enforcement officials previously described draw heavily on a rights-based framework of child protection while also emphasizing theories of psychosocial well-being pertaining to children in conflict with the law.

According to conversations with those familiar with the social work curricula in **Sierra Leone**, there is generally no overarching theoretical approach to trainings of social workers. However a review of the Ministry of Social Welfare's National Training Center's (2013) curriculum for social workers indicates that social work students should be "theory-based practitioners," using, screening and selecting appropriate theories to use with specific client populations. The curriculum has a heavy focus on the person-in-environment framework.

Research

As previously mentioned, this review looked at research in two ways: 1) the degree to which training in research methods is being taught across country contexts by various actors (academic programs as well as UN agencies and NGOs); and 2) the degree to which existing or ongoing research is being incorporated as part of existing training modules and curricula. Generally speaking, social science research methods represent a relative strength of social work training throughout the WCA region; a number of formal training institutes as well as NGO- and CBO-

focused training modules cover basic research principles and methods for the trainees to be able to generate and use evidence in their social service practice. Across the region, the NGO Enda Tiers Monde has also trained extensively on Participatory Action Research (PAR) with children as part of their work with the African Movement of Working Children and Youth, an approach that was also used with some NGOs in Liberia working on teenage pregnancy¹⁴.

Conversely, however, the most recent country-level research on child protection and social welfare topics was only rarely integrated into formal training materials, which—with some exceptions—are not regularly revised or updated.

Country-level analysis of research methods in social work training

In **Benin**, all national curricula also include modules on research methods, including an exercise where students conduct field-based research as well as learn the principles of program evaluation. This fact is true of training materials for each of the social work degree programs offered as well as specialized modules that exist for police, military commanders, and judicial personnel.

Similarly, the academic programs in **Burkina Faso** provide a strong emphasis on research at the INFTS. In their first year, students collectively undertake a social welfare situation analysis in a village located near the training institute. For higher-level programs, students are required to prepare a thesis consisting of original research as a requirement for graduation. Included in the documents examined as part of this review were guidelines for student theses, which provided an overview of theoretical frameworks, research methods, as well as the analysis and interpretation of results. These components also represent central parts of the core curriculum provided to students throughout their program. In addition, the three-year training initiative in child protection being carried out by INFTS, UNICEF, and the Ministry mentioned above also includes modules on data collection and research methods pertaining to child protection issues.



Figure 1: Library at the INFTS, Burkina Faso

In the case of **Cameroon**, documents reflected a somewhat limited approach to research methods although it is important to note that the research team was not able to acquire a copy of the full

¹⁴ For more information on this approach see: “enfants en recherché et en action: une alternative africaine d’animation urbaine ». enda tiers-monde, Dakar 1995.

academic curriculum that was used prior to the closing of the relevant institute. For example, a training document for psychosocial service workers (*Projet d'organisation d'une session de formation de 25 intervenants sociaux du secteur public, des organisations de la société civile et des communes des départements et la prise en charge psychosociale des enfants en situation difficile, 2008/2012*) includes monitoring and evaluation skills but does not expand upon what elements of monitoring and evaluation are taught and how.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the INFS curriculum includes required coursework in social science research methods, and higher-level programs require original research undertaken simultaneously with their internship as a requirement for graduation. During their internship, students meet weekly to discuss their internship and their research with their class cohort and their internship supervisors. (Students do not, as in Burkina Faso, have individualized thesis supervisors.) It is less clear to what extent NGOs and CBOs are receiving research-related training. For example, in the *Module de formation sur: L'implication des enfants et des communautés dans les projets de protection dans le Moyen Cavally et 18 Montagnes* (2008), there is discussion about the importance of including children in research, yet the document does not include how research should be designed and conducted in order to include children.

In the case of **Ghana**, all formal training programs examined as part of this review placed a strong priority on research. At the government-sponsored School of Social Work, students take basic courses in research methods, and write a research-based thesis as part of their degree requirements. At the University of Ghana, all undergraduate and graduate programs in social work also incorporated research methods, and required students to do field-based research in order to fulfill their thesis requirement. The research components were particularly intensive at the Master's and Doctoral levels, and students described receiving training in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches. Students during the field visit reported a desire for more training on data analysis and other technical aspects of study design, although reported that research was included at all levels of their university training.

In **Liberia**, in most cases, NGO trainings did not emphasize research methods although they did highlight the importance of monitoring and reporting cases of gender-based violence. In addition, modules for the police also highlighted necessary steps for the investigation of cases and gathering evidence in an appropriate manner, as exemplified in the 2009-2010 training guide prepared by the Liberian Ministry of Justice and the Norwegian Refugee Council entitled, *WACPS [Women and Children Protection Section] Training: Responding to Cases of SGBV*. As such, research was not discussed from an academic standpoint, but rather in terms of promoting passive surveillance through monitoring and reporting mechanisms. In this way, these approaches might be designated as a type of passive surveillance. The certificate program in Child Protection being piloted by the PLG and the University of Liberia proposes to include a comprehensive evaluation component to find out if students are satisfied with what they learned; however additional information on the degree to which the university curriculum will incorporate research methods is not available based on the documents examined as part of this review.

In **Nigeria**, research was included in curricula in various ways. For example, a UNICEF and Save the Children training (*Child protection in emergencies: Nigeria training manual: Phase 1 and Phase 2, 2012*) focuses on conducting child protection rapid assessments using a mixed methods approach that heavily emphasizes the qualitative component. In Phase 1 of the training,

participants learn about the elements of a research project (sampling, interviewing, and data analysis for rapid assessments) and are provided with an overview of assessment tools, discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each. In Phase 2 of the training, participants engage in a field assignment with other students from the same region, using the rapid assessment conducted by teams after phase 1 to influence program design. In terms of academic curricula, the *National Innovative Diploma (NID) on Professional Development Early Childhood Care* (2007) includes a course that teaches students how to write reports and articles for publication and another course entitled “Introduction to numerical value,” which includes basic statistics (ratio, proportion, percentages). It is important to note, however, there is no content in this program that specifically addressed how to conduct research. The curricula developed by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) for the National Diploma (ND) and the Higher National Diploma (HND) include in-depth courses specifically on research methods. Some of the objectives for the *HND in Social Development: Social Welfare Option* (2009) that are related to research include: (2.0) to monitor and evaluate social welfare programs, (3.0) undertake direct and supportive role to enable him/her rise to the highest possible level in academic, research, and teaching, and (8.0) conduct an assessment of social welfare programs. The *Social Welfare Option* also includes comprehensive courses on social statistics, research methods, and monitoring and evaluation. At the end of the program, students conduct a research project, either case study, survey, or quasi-experimental. Similarly, the NBTE’s *HND in Social Development: Youth and Sport Option* (2009) aims for participants to be able to conduct an assessment of and monitor and evaluate programs for youth. Like the Social Welfare Option, this curriculum also includes sessions on social statistics and research methods.

In **Senegal**, there is a strong component of research in the curriculum that is also linked to practical work in the field. Students learn the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodology (MARP in French). Also, as part of their training, students have to write a dissertation for both the three-year diploma and the three-year higher degree. Professors learn about new research through the seminars offered by partner universities and organizations, but it is not clear how this new information is included in sessions for students.

In **Sierra Leone**, the soon-to-be-revised NTC social work curriculum (2013) states that students are expected to know research concepts and skills to conduct surveys and assessments, to use research designs to evaluate client outcomes, and to evaluate program effectiveness. Furthermore, the NTC indicates that social work students are expected to know how to use statistics and computers to analyze data and present graphical representations of their findings. The curriculum includes a course on social research as an introduction to basic research, with an introduction to research proposal writing. In Sierra Leone, UNICEF is working to develop monitoring tools that could be used by the child protection committees to keep track of the social issues in the communities. Otherwise, research, M&E, program evaluation is not integrated into any of the training programs. According to UNICEF, efforts are underway to see what practices exist and subsequently to develop curriculum and modules to make sure that M&E is integrated into the training and that it is taught correctly and also that it is simple and user-friendly training rather than complicated training (just basic research skills). Organizations such as UNICEF have done quite a lot of research in the country, including community-based child protection systems mapping; although these studies have been conducted in part by Sierra Leonean research teams, there appears to be no effort to teach social workers themselves how to do these kinds of mappings in their daily work.

In the case of some countries examined as part of this review, such as **Mauritania and Niger** available documents did not describe the degree to which research methods are incorporated into existing training approaches. As such, it was not possible to draw conclusions on the nature of research methods training in these contexts.

Country-level analysis of the incorporation of existing research into training across countries (e.g., statistics, current research, best practice)

Information was less available among the documents examined as part of this review in terms of the degree to which evidence-based research is incorporated in training activities. In most countries where the primary data source was the literature review (**Benin, Cameroon, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone**), the documents reviewed did not indicate the extent to which research is integrated into training programs. There is a tendency to use the term “best practice” in many documents, but at the same time, the documents do not indicate that these practices have actually been tested and measured and are therefore actually reflecting best practice. In one instance, a joint Ministry of Justice and UNICEF training in **Cameroon** (*Evaluation of juvenile justice training*, n.d.) states that it based its training objectives on “international best practice,” but it does not state what those best practices are.

Examples of this gap in the use of evidence-based research are evident in other countries as well. In **Côte d’Ivoire**, *Module de formation sur: L’implication des enfants et des communautés dans les projets de protection dans le Moyen Cavally et 18 Montagnes* (2008) includes an overview of child abuse but does not include current data/research on aspects, such as prevalence of forms of child abuse. Social work students and in-service social service workforce representatives were unable to recall whether or not they had received any research in their training. Likewise, the joint Government of **Sierra Leone**’s Ministry of Social Welfare’s (2009) *Dealing with child abuse: A handbook for child welfare workers in Sierra Leone* uses just one statistic from the Family Support Unit (FSU) of the Sierra Leone police, citing the prevalence rate for child cruelty cases reported; the rest of the document, however, does not draw upon current research or provide any other prevalence rates in regards to child protection.

In the case of **Nigeria**, one salient criticism of existing curricula includes the fact that social workers do not have access to research that informs their practice. Research conducted on the social issues in Nigeria is conducted at the university level, and there is a surprising dearth of research on social issues for a country with a strong university system. As a result, there is not a strong knowledge base within Nigeria itself from which curricula can draw, and many programs end up importing data from international research that is not necessarily specific to the country. This gap can be attributed to two research challenges: one challenge is lack of funding to conduct research (especially within the social sciences, which is historically underfunded), and another challenge is that Nigerian-specific research is often not published, thereby making it inaccessible for on-the-ground social workers. The *National Innovative Diploma (NID) on Professional Development Early Childhood Care* (2007) developed by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in Nigeria does not indicate if it draws upon actual research for child protection issues; rather, teachers and students often use newspaper articles to learn about instances of child abuse.

Against this rather bleak backdrop in which current research does not seem to be integrated into social work training, there are some glimmers of hope. In **Burkina Faso**, although social work students and professors at the INFTS did not indicate that the students are required read recent research, the institute has nonetheless recently opened a library. An examination of the library collections indicated that it holds both international books on social work theory and practice as well as nationally published books of interest.

In **Nigeria**, social work libraries at the Federal School of Social Work in Unugu, Nigeria and University of Nigeria in Nsukka also contain several recent and popular social work textbooks, though social work administrators noted the financial challenges of keeping these collections up-to-date.

Figure 2: Social work textbooks available at University of Nigeria, Nsukka



In **DRC**, one NGO training document draws from the IASC Guidelines, which incorporate evidence-based research (see *Programme protection RDC: Genre, violences basées sur le genre, et violences sexuelles: notre approche*, 2010). In **Ghana**, professors frustrated with the lack of locally relevant readings also compiled a social work reader comprised of articles specific to Ghana and relevant for social workers.

Policy and legislation

This analysis examined the ways in which curricula and training materials address the issue of policy and legislation—both in terms of the types of policies and laws that are included as well as the degree to which programs seek to prepare social workers to serve as advocates who can influence and contribute to policy and legislative change.

In terms of the *types of policies and legislation incorporated in training programs*, documents examined in this review frequently emphasized international human rights and child protection standards, particularly the UN CRC along with other relevant international treaties and conventions. In many cases, national laws and policies pertaining to child protection and child rights were also emphasized although this inclusion of national-level policies and laws varied by country context. A lesser mentioned area included pan-African instruments and treaties, notably the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (distinguished from the CRC by its emphasis on children's rights *and responsibilities*), although these regional-level documents were mentioned in a few cases. (Not one document examined nor interview conducted brought to bear, for example, the ECOWAS Child Protection Policy.) Among documents developed by NGOs, there was a strong emphasis on international human rights principles with less of an emphasis on traditional social work theory.

During the fieldwork, social work students, professors, and practitioners were invited to share laws and policies that they had learned about during their training, and their findings largely corroborated what the document review demonstrated: most of the laws and policies on which they had received training were international in nature with significantly less emphases on regional or national laws. There were some exceptions to this rule, notably in Francophone countries. In both Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, specific modules dedicated to the legal framework for social work were incorporated in the training modules. The content of these modules will be discussed in the country-specific sections below. In Ghana, programs at the University of Ghana also include a strong focus on national and regional laws in addition to national legislation, and encourage students to critically examine national policies. As mentioned above, there is also a strong in-country focus in Ghana on how best to incorporate the new Child Welfare Policy and Juvenile Justice Policy into current university programs, as these new policies have received significant support from UNICEF and the government, and emphasize a community-based approach to social service provision.

Regarding the degree to which training programs *emphasized policy-driven change*, there was much less emphasis in this area. With the exception of Senegal, where practicing social workers highlighted that they had been involved in policy development, in-country respondents in all countries where fieldwork was conducted nearly unanimously responded that they had not been trained in or engaged in policy change through their work. Students at the University of Ghana did report taking courses that focus on critically examining national policies, and suggesting possible alternatives. In other countries, advocacy was described in limited ways, which will be included below.

Country-level examination of types of policies and legislation incorporated in training programs

In both **Benin and Senegal**, national curricula examined as part of this review emphasize a broad range of policies and laws, including international legal standards, as well as regional documents such as the African Charter on Human Rights and the ACRWC. In addition, training programs for justice sector agents provide an extensive overview of national laws and policies pertaining to child rights, child protection, and juvenile justice although it is unclear if social workers receive the same training at the social work institute, which does not appear to include an overview of laws and policies.

In **Burkina Faso**, social work professors indicated that they trained students on the *Politique Nationale des Affaires Sociales (PNAS)*, but students interviewed indicated that they were not familiar with the PNAS. Nonetheless, the core curriculum for social workers in Burkina does include several laws and policies with significant relevance for their daily work: notably, the TOS described above, the *Code des Personnes et de la Famille (CPF)*—the legal code governing family structure, adoption, tutelage, and other care concerns—and the labor laws regulating civil service in the country. *Educateurs spécialisés* who will work with children in conflict with the law receive training specific to juvenile justice. Taken together, then, the government social workers in Burkina receive training that is well grounded in national law. NGO and CBO workers' ad hoc trainings, on the other hand, did not seem to include law and policy frameworks beyond international treaties such as the CRC.

In the case of **Cameroon**, documents introduced policy by providing an overview of the local/national legal system as related to child protection as well as the CRC. For example, UNICEF's *Projet d'organisation une session de formation de 25 intervenants sociaux du secteur public, des organisations de la société civile et des communes des départements et la prise en charge psychosociale des enfants en situation difficile* (2008/2012) includes an emphasis on the legal framework behind institutional protection of children in difficult situations.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, many of the training materials collected referenced and emphasized the CRC. The national social worker curriculum at INFS does include modules on civil law, criminal law, and labor law for civil servants; however the short nature of these modules results in a very cursory treatment of them. Social workers were not able to recall laws and policies on which they had received training. Paraprofessional training materials also emphasized policy in terms of local/national legal structures, as seen in the document, *AIDSTAR-One: case studies series* (2011), which provides an overview of Côte d'Ivoire's legal units as taught to NGO and CBO workers. Although regional legal structures were less emphasized, Save the Children UK's (2008) *Module de formation sur: L'implication des enfants et des communautés dans les projets de protection dans le Moyen Cavally et 18 Montagnes* from Côte d'Ivoire describes the regional legal provisions pertaining to child protection.

In the **DRC**, documents broadly address human rights, framed under international conventions and instruments. For example, in a program overview document on gender-based violence (*Programme protection RDC: Genre, violences basées sur le genre, et violences sexuelles: notre approche*), sexual violence is defined as a violation of human rights.

In **Ghana**, programs included content on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other international legislation, as well as relevant regional and national legislation. Professors at the University of Ghana reported incorporating national policies pertaining to child welfare into their courses, and staying abreast of national policy changes. As previously mentioned, there is a strong emphasis among Governments actors, UNICEF, and other child protection professionals regarding how best to incorporate provisions of the new Child and Family Welfare Policy and the Juvenile Justice Policy, both of which emphasize the role of community-based practice. As mentioned above, UNICEF along with NGOs have developed a draft training manual on working with communities to coincide with these new policy initiatives and will engage in a widespread dissemination strategy once the new policies have been formally adopted.

In the case of **Liberia**, NGO trainings emphasized international human rights principles as well as national laws and policies related to GBV. In addition to ratifying international treaties and conventions pertaining to GBV, Liberia has also developed significant national legislation in this area as well as national service delivery system for survivors. As such, these national-level legislative efforts were commonly included in training materials. In addition, the court system, legal framework, and activities of the judicial and security sector related to GBV prevention and response were also emphasized. The academic training program is still underway, and so information on the degree to which it emphasizes policy issues is not available, other than its early-stage emphasis on international child protection and human rights.

In **Niger**, the multi-country training module for security forces and military personnel previously mentioned draws heavily on the CRC as well as international legal provisions regarding the protection of children in times of conflict as well as policies that exist regarding the prevention of various forms of exploitation and abuse. It is unclear to what extent national laws and policies form part of the core social worker curriculum.

In **Nigeria**, emphasis is relatively well balanced between international and national laws and policies. NGO trainings tended to use an international human rights framework, mentioning the CRC, such as the case of Save the Children UK's (n.d.) *Protecting children during emergencies in Nigeria: A toolkit for trainers*. In Nigeria's *National Innovative Diploma (NID) on Professional Development Early Childhood Care Management* (2007) developed by the NBTE includes learning about the National Policy on Education (NPE), Universal Basic Education (UBE), the National Policy for Early Childhood Development, as well as a course on the Nigerian constitution. Similarly, the NBTE's *Higher National Diploma (HND) in Social Development (Social Welfare Option)* (2009) includes courses on the role of Nigeria's three tiers of government, the role of the UN and NGOs in Nigeria, the criminal justice system (which includes sessions on children in conflict with the law and its relation to the Nigerian Child Rights Act (CRA), Nigerian and international (e.g., CEDAW) gender policy, as well as basic Nigerian law (e.g., customary law marriages, family welfare policies, social security, Family Allowance Act, and the National Assistance Act. It is perhaps surprising that the country's relatively comprehensive Child Rights Act appears only in training documents, and social service workforce representatives interviewed for this study did not recall training on many laws and policies that they had received.

In **Sierra Leone**, the *Dealing with child abuse* handbook from the Government of Sierra Leone's Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs (2009) provides a legal framework by which to address the rights and well-being of children in Sierra Leone but, interestingly, does not mention the National Policy for Child Well-Being (now replaced by the newer National Child Welfare Policy). Save the Children's *Workshop report: Advanced training of trainers for child protection personnel* (2009) from Sierra Leone (also used in [Liberia](#)) includes a session on international legal standards, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Child Rights Act (CRA). In general, training materials in Sierra Leone tend very heavily toward international frameworks.

Country-level analysis of ways in which training programs emphasize policy-driven change

None of the training documents reviewed included specific modules on advocacy or on promoting policy change. Moreover, study respondents were quite clear during the fieldwork that they had not received such training. Nonetheless, a handful of highly localized examples did emerge.

In **Burkina Faso**, social workers indicated that their daily tasks included advocating on behalf of vulnerable people for the social service provisions to which they were legally entitled but about which local politicians and administrators were often unaware. Provisions cited included waivers of Parent-Teachers Association fees for extremely poor families, access to public areas for people with disabilities, and others, for which social workers in Burkina Faso indicated that they advocated locally. As in other settings, these social workers also highlighted that their relatively low visibility within the government translated into an inability to advocate very successfully with other sectors.

One local-level example of localized advocacy training in **Côte d'Ivoire** emerges from the community mobilization modules that were developed by Save the Children (2008) in order to encourage communities to take collective action to protect children. Anecdotal evidence about community mobilization training emerged throughout the fieldwork, but these modules from Côte d'Ivoire were the only written examples of such training uncovered through the literature review.

In **Nigeria**, the objectives of NBTE's *Higher National Diploma (HND) in Social Development (Social Welfare Option)* (2009) seek to "to advise the government on social welfare programmes" but do not specifically include training on advocacy skills. Similarly, the *HND Social Development (Youth and Sport Option)* (2009) states that an objective of the program is to advise the Nigerian government on youth projects and programs, but there are no sessions in the curricula that specifically address these skills for program participants. In-country participants in Nigeria expressed clearly that they did not feel adequately prepared to take on advocacy or policy reform tasks. One common reaction across all fieldwork countries was for respondents to indicate that they would like to receive training on advocacy and policy change, given the social justice nature of social work.

Practice

Within the context of this analysis, documents were reviewed in order to determine the ways in which practice was incorporated in curricula and training materials. Attention was given to two types of practice: 1) the types of skills and core competencies for social work practice that were identified in existing training curricula and programs; and 2) whether or not training programs included field-based internships or practicums as part of their components. A case story tool was used to better understand how practicing social workers were using their training and education in real life examples.

In most of the countries analyzed for this study, the practice of social work was a core—indeed, often the core—focus of training programs, especially for government social workers. Although the above-mentioned lack of clarity about specific tasks and roles of social workers often made the teaching of specific skills and competencies a challenge, nearly all of the training institutes and courses examined demonstrated significant, thorough measures for training through practical application.

In many cases, practical application took the form of practical exercises, such as simulations. In Burkina Faso, for example, social work students conducted situation analyses together in communities near their training sites, or professors accompanied students to undertake awareness-raising sessions in villages in the same region. In another example targeted to both NGOs and government agencies, Save the Children and UNICEF in Nigeria developed a child protection in emergencies training module that not only included a series of role-plays during the training itself but also left a three-month pause in the training between two sessions in which inter-agency teams actually undertook a localized rapid assessment before designing joint programs. NGO and CBO trainings often included significant practice components built into the training modules.

Although few respondents indicated that case management had been a focal point of their training, a few initiatives do seem to be underway, including case management and intervision (case conferences, or meetings) trainings in Burkina Faso and the roll-out of case management trainings from the global working group on unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) in Benin.

In the countries where fieldwork occurred, the concept of alternation between theory and practice was an explicitly stated pedagogical goal and one that is in keeping with global social work education standards. This alternation often came in the form of internships, whose structure, supervision, and length varied tremendously from country to country. Internships seemed especially central in the Francophone countries, but in all countries, social work students expressed enthusiasm for the role that internships played in their education and training.

Country-level analysis of practice

In **Benin**, all programs offered at the ESAS include a practical component, in order to provide students with field-based opportunities to gain experience in various types of social work practice. Social work students served internships in both government and NGO sites, including

prisons, social welfare centers, transit centers for children being reintegrated into their families after trafficking, and others. One key informant in Benin indicated that the in-country child protection working group was intending to adopt and adapt the global case management tools emanating from the working group in UASC.

In **Burkina Faso**, the national training program also places a strong emphasis on practice, with internships included as part of the curriculum. These internships begin with a one-month “observational” internship during the first year of training, followed by increasingly lengthy internships in years two and three in either government or NGO sites. Internships are supervised both by on-site social workers as well as periodic visits from INFTS teachers. INFTS has documented its internship process exceptionally well: a manual for student practicums was included among the documents examined as part of this review, which emphasized the importance of linking social work theory and practice. A separate manual for supervisors was also examined in the review, showing the linkages between mentorship and student learning as part of the practicum experience. In addition to the practicum, various programs include field-based experiences with particular agencies or populations as part of the training program. Students and teachers alike expressed high enthusiasm for the internship component of training although this year has been beset with some administrative glitches over the INFTS’s capacity to administratively supervise students in sites throughout the country.

Case Story #1: Burkina Faso

In the below case story, a Burkinabè social worker in the child and family service division in a social welfare center in Ouagadougou explains how she managed a recent child protection case and how her decision-making processes were linked to her initial and her on-going training. She identifies significant relevance from her training in her daily work.

Talking the research team through a case she recently managed, she tells of a mother who arrived at the social welfare center one morning. After being welcomed at the triage desk, the woman was referred to this social worker. “She explained that her [ex-]husband had chased their daughter from his house,” says the social worker, adding that the woman and her ex-husband had been separated for many years. Their daughter, now a teenager, had grown up primarily in the father’s home. The mother did not know why the father had put the daughter out; the daughter had gone to stay with a paternal aunt.

“I know that I would need to talk to the father and the daughter to get the full story,” the social worker explains. She sent the father, a medical doctor, a summons to come to the social welfare center for a consultation the following day, which the father respected. There, with the girl’s mother also present, he explained that he had heard rumors that the daughter had begun hanging out with a drug-abusing gang at her high school. He had put her out as a means to shake the daughter up and make her think about her decision to affiliate with this crowd. “As he told the story, he cried,” says the social worker. “I was surprised to see a doctor cry before me.” With both parents’ permission, the social worker visited the daughter at school. “She had some strange piercings,” explains the social worker, “but I could see that she wasn’t a bad kid. The alleged ‘gang’ was non-conventional, but they were not involved with drugs.”

Once she had spoken to the three parties—the mother, father, and daughter—the social worker

convened a case conference meeting that also included a policeman and a psychologist. “The psychologist helped me to understand that the daughter was really seeking her father’s attention. We agreed that I would try to convince the father to take the daughter back home and to have more conversations with her. The psychologist’s input was really useful for me.” A subsequent meeting between the social worker and the father proved successful for the objectives laid out in the case conference meeting.

Simple as this case may seem, it demonstrates social work practice in Burkina Faso as being interdisciplinary and embedded in the local community; community members reach out to social workers to deal with relevant family issues, and social workers’ advice carries weight. Asked what training or education had been useful in managing such a case, the social worker gives clear examples. “The core course on individual social work gave me the skills to talk to people. Active listening was a module of that course that is very important. In talking to the girl, I also used behavior change communication strategies, trying to get her to understand where her father was coming from, how she might have a better relationship with him. I think that behavior change communication was also in the course on individual social work—or maybe group social work.”

The above courses were part of the social workers’ training at the INFTS, but the social worker also lauds a recent one-day training on “case conferences” as giving her the idea to convene the policeman and the psychologist to discuss the case and to brainstorm options. That training was conducted by the international NGO Terre des hommes in collaboration with the continuing education directorate of the INFTS. “Case conferences are an indispensable tool for our work.”

The social worker believes her training to have been sufficient to manage this case but would like advanced training in family mediation. Case stories collected in rural parts of Burkina Faso also revealed satisfaction with and use of the preliminary INFTS training combine with a desire to specialize in areas like family mediation or working with children in conflict with the law. The social worker in Ouagadougou still sees the adolescent girl from time to time in the neighborhood and says that the girl considers her a friend and a confidant. “I love helping people. I have a calling for this work. You have to because nobody does it for the money!”

In **Cameroon**, documents indicate that the Ministry of Justice emphasizes the importance of incorporating practice-related content as part of trainings. For example, the UNICEF report (n.d.), *Evaluation of juvenile justice training*, explains: “While theoretical discussions of international standards and child rights principles may be appreciated by policy makers, justice sector professionals generally respond best to practical, operational-level content. The trainees’ unspoken question throughout the course will be: “What does this have to do with my daily work?” Professionals want to know not just what the standards are, but also how they can realistically and effectively implement those standards within the context of their work” (p. 16). The current closure of the national training centers leaves more up-to-date information about the role of practice in social work training impossible to gauge.

In **Côte d’Ivoire**, there is also a strong emphasis on practice-related training. According to the *Cartographie et analyse du système de protection de l’enfant* (2010), for example, sixty-percent of Côte d’Ivoire’s curriculum is in the form of a project or practicum. Much as in Burkina Faso,

all students at the INFS participate in extensive internships throughout their three years of training: the first year comprises a one-month internship in a medical center while year two expands to a six-month internship in a socio-medical center. The third year internship, for students of that level, is conducted in a purely social context, either NGO or government. Two limitations affect the impact of the internship program at the INFS (although students nonetheless exude vigor when talking about their internships): first, 90% of the students conduct their internships in Abidjan, and second, there is just one internship director responsible for liaising with the on-site supervisors in the scores of sites where students are placed.

In **Ghana**, all formal training programs in social work included field-based practicums. At the University of Ghana, field-based practicums are required as part of both the Bachelor's and Master's degree levels. While practical training was required for all students, respondents during the field visit reported that the quality of supervision at the field level varied largely depending on the agency at which students were placed as well as the qualifications of particular supervisors. Students at the government-sponsored School of Social Work also complete field practicums, which take place at various units with the Department of Social Welfare. At both the University of Ghana and the School of Social Work, coursework emphasized particular aspects of social work practice, such as group work, individual assessment, and skills for engaging with particular populations, such as women, children, the elderly, and those with HIV/AIDS or physical disabilities.

Case Story #2: Ghana

The following is a description of the Ghanaian Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection's approach to responding to suspected cases of child trafficking. This summary was provided by a senior government social worker, and emphasizes the ways in which the Government of Ghana promotes working with families and community-based structures—an approach also emphasized in Ghana's new Child and Family Welfare Policy. The summary also highlights the fact that the latest research and thinking on child trafficking – and the shift to a broader approach to child mobility in the region – has not yet been adopted at the practice level in Ghana.

The majority of trafficking is internal, with children moving between regions for fishing, hair braiding for girls, and others types of labor¹⁵. Trafficked children come mostly from the north. In the north, poverty rates are high and parents and children find ways of coming south¹⁶.

In Europe and America, there are more police and services. But here in Ghana, community-based structures and families should be strengthened so that they can protect children. In the north, community child protection committees need to be sensitized to be their own keepers and their neighbor's keepers. They are trained to identify and respond to cases of child abuse. For example, if a child is missing, a community member can ask, "How come I haven't

¹⁵ The research team would note that although the government worker used the term "trafficking" here, what the person is describing is actually children's mobility for a broader number of reasons than those related to trafficking.

¹⁶ Again, the research team would note that what the government social worker is describing here would more appropriately be described as children's migration or children on the move, not only child trafficking.

found this child in a few days?" Community-based programs are the focus of the government and these activities. However, there are not committees in all districts.

If a child is trafficked, for example, they can run to another home or NGO, and go to a family home or that of a chief. NGOs are often the ones who make referrals to the government once cases are referred through community channels. If a case of trafficking is discovered, we will talk to the family who is keeping the child and explain the Trafficking Act and Child Rights Act so that they can understand the laws and policies within Ghana. We will work to make sure the child is rescued and then ensure that the child is given care and rehabilitation services. We also do family tracing to find relatives. NGOs are involved in tracing activities.

The police as well as security and immigration forces or with NGOs will do rescues. It's not right for NGOs to do rescues. There should be police or security forces involved so that they can track and follow up. We should have data on these cases. If NGOs try to do this on their own without collaborating, it can be problematic.

Sometimes you can rescue children through clandestine means or use sensitization as a way to try to address the issue. The first entry is always sensitization if a case of child trafficking is uncovered. You never go in directly and confront. It's a long process. You have to talk about child rights and the Trafficking Act and build relationships with the chiefs and other community leaders. You need to convince them that it's in the best interest of the child to let them go. In some cases you can threaten them with prosecution. As a result of this process, they usually let them go. Sometimes however parents are involved in re-trafficking children if they do not have means, and so it becomes a complicated process.

....Children who are rescued from trafficking are provided with counseling.... Children also receive skills training. If children are school-age, they are encouraged to go back to school. If they are adults, then they participate in apprenticeships such as dressmaking and other skills. Churches are involved in rehabilitation as well.

In **Liberia**, NGO trainings have a strong emphasis on practice, particularly with regard to the prevention and response of GBV. Community-based trainings focused on the referral of cases, while trainings for police and judicial officials emphasized more nuanced details of practice, such as the investigation of cases, handling medical evidence, court monitoring, etc. The academic program does not provide significant details on the ways in which practice is incorporated, since its development is still underway.

In **Nigeria**, there have been efforts to better connect the classroom to the field. For example, the National University Commission has developed guidelines and structures by which to teach, with an emphasis on the integration between what students are learning in the classroom and good practice. Case stories gathered in Nigeria revealed that those who were not trained in social work are making decisions about child protection, but are not necessarily trained in best practices to address child protection issues.

Case Story #3: Nigeria

The following is a case story told by a government social worker in Nigeria, with a Bachelor's degree in social studies and a Master's degree in sociology:

We were requested to attend to a case that was brought before them that day. Someone at a secondary school had seen a teenaged girl sleeping on the compound and brought her to the government office. ... When I arrived, the girl...stated that she was raped by her father, for which she received empathy from all those around her. When I interviewed her, I tried to find out exactly what happened. She explained that her mother was unable to pay her school fees, and she was eager to go to school. So, she left her mother's home to visit her father. She explained that her parents had been separated since she was young. So, she arrived at her father's house very late in the evening, and there was no food. She said that her father asked if she wanted to eat, and she said that she was very hungry. The father also confirmed that he was very hungry. The girl also told her father that she had a headache, and she requested that her father bring her some Panadol as well. The father also said that he had a headache and needed Panadol. So he went out and bought the food and the Panadol. When he returned, he gave the girl the food and watched her take the Panadol. She said that she became very tired, and she went to sleep right away. She woke up in the morning to find herself in a pool of blood, and she screamed, which brought her father's attention. She did not need anyone to interpret that she had been raped, since her father was the only one in the house. So, she now confronted her father asking him what he did. The father was pacifying her and asked for forgiveness. She was very angry and left her father's home for her mother's home. She informed her mother what happened. She also informed the community about what had happened, because she was so angry about what her father did. She thought that parents should be protective, and her father was not....

[The girl] also claimed that there was a second rape by the father. So while interviewing her, I wanted to know what led to the second rape. She said that she went to collect school fees from her father again. But I thought that she was lying. How else can we counsel her if we don't know the truth? So I told her that she didn't go to collect school fees, but she specifically went to have sexual relations with her father again. I believe that when she was raped for the first time, she enjoyed it. I believe that it wasn't rape the second time, because she wanted it. She tasted the forbidden fruit, and so she went for a second round.

... I started to ask her questions about the second rape. I asked her, "How did the second rape happen?" She said that she couldn't talk about it. I proposed to her that she went for the second time, because she enjoyed the first time. She didn't say anything to me. So when the clinical psychologist came and interviewed her, the clinical psychologist confirmed that the girl went voluntarily for the second time. We confirmed that for the second time, the girl was there on her own. ...

The girl is still at the shelter and is currently under counseling. We are still figuring out what the next plan of action is, and then we will take it from there. I believe that the girl was happy with how we handled her case. In fact, she is my friend now. I am sure if she had a phone, she would be calling me. I told her she was a beautiful girl, and beautiful girls do not tell lies. That is what my mother told me. The truth will set you free, so we need the truth. She said that even though I was counseling her, she saw a level of love from me, because I was trying to talk to her and

motivate her, telling her that if she told the truth, she would be set free, and that she has to come up with the truth. My emphasis was on the second time she went to visit her father. The first time was rape, but the second time was not rape.

I didn't consult with others in the office, just the human rights officer at the organization who referred her and the counselor. It is something we are used to working on alone. I learned how to do this from my experience, because my father was a prosecution officer in the police. So based on that, when I was questioning the girl, I heard his voice telling me what questions to ask. I told her that if she comes out with the truth, then no one will condemn her, and her burden will be reduced. I have also learned from everyday meetings with families. It is not only from the classroom that I learn how to do this.

As this complicated case shows, the government social worker made her decisions based on gut instinct—channeling her father's voice, who was a prosecution officer for the police—as well as past experience working with families. But she did not draw upon any child protection framework to guide her practice.

Although social work students and social workers themselves in Nigeria indicated that the practice component of their training was relatively weak, there are two models for practice-focused learning that can be further explored. The first model is the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), which gives Nigerian students studying occupationally-related courses in higher institutions the experience that would supplement their theoretical learning. Social work students can theoretically be given the opportunity to complete their SIWES with institutes that are engaged in social work activities, and in particular those who are working for child protection. The second model is the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), a project set up by the Nigerian government to involve their country's graduates in the development of the country. Graduates of polytechnics and universities are required to participate in the NYSC program for one year, known as “national service year”, in a community far from their community of origin. They are expected to mix with people from other ethnic and social backgrounds in order to learn about a different culture and to appreciate other ethnic groups. Social work education activities are occasionally and could more systematically be integrated in the NYSC model by providing social work graduates with a cross-cultural work experience in the field.

In **Senegal**, students undertake a series of practical internships that begin just 3-months into the course. These internships are organized by the ENTSS and happen in three stages: the initial introductory placements (both rural and urban); the analysis placement (i.e. in an institution to undertake a micro-analysis); the evaluation placement (where students undertake a diagnostic). Students also go into the “field” to learn the PRA methodology.

Sierra Leone's National Training Center (NTC) curriculum for social workers does not indicate whether there is a practice component required for completion of the degree program; however, the inclusion of a “Career Guidance Center” at the NTC indicates that there is some effort to connect the academic degree to the development of the social work workforce in Sierra Leone.

VI. Recommendations and Action Steps

The various data sources for this study all point to a shared desire—among social workers, NGO and CBO workers, social administrators, development partners, and others—to professionalize the field of social work in the WCA region. The below recommendations are therefore geared toward that ultimate objective, not only in the sense of strengthening professional and accredited social workers but also in clarifying the roles, responsibilities, and operational frameworks that all social service workers, including NGO and CBO workers, will use to guide their actions and decision-making.

Recommendation #1: In countries within the WCA region, a preliminary process to determine the specific roles and responsibilities of social workers and social service workers more broadly should be the starting point for eventual discussions about strengthening the training programs available. The clear profiles for the various levels of social workers in Burkina Faso could serve as a good starting point for other countries who wish to create additional clarity and cohesion in their professional social workforce although even those job profiles do not clearly indicate, for example, how government social workers are expected to interact with NGO and CBO workers and community leaders, whose perceptions of social work and of child protection are likely to differ, perhaps significantly, from those of professional social work.¹⁷ Such processes would likely be led by the relevant ministries covering social affairs in each country, but for commonly agreed visions of the role of the social service workforce to take root, it will be crucial for these processes to include discussions with other key stakeholders, notably NGO and CBO workers and traditional leadership representatives. National governments in most countries would benefit from developing more explicit legal frameworks for the social work profession. At the practice level, clearer job descriptions for social workers in their particular contexts are a gap. Such policies and practice documents could elaborate the necessary skills that a social worker needs and contexts that a social worker may work. Various job profiles for different kinds of social workers—including various kinds of specialist professional social worker as well as auxiliary/paraprofessional social workers—would also be helpful.

The clarification of the role of social service workers at each level will necessarily need to include exploration of the ultimate goal of social work in each country. The relevant ministries of social affairs in countries throughout the region should take advantage of national development planning processes—such as the development of national poverty reduction strategies or similar processes—to start conversations around these issues and to bring increased attention to the potential role of the social service workforce. Questions that will require clarification or additional consideration will include: what is the ultimate goal of the social service workforce in the country? How does the social service workforce contribute to broader efforts to ensure social protection and national development? Is the workforce expected, for example, to engage in broad community development—as social work training in the 1970s throughout Africa suggested—or are there more focused niche areas that social workers should be responsible for ensuring, such as family mediation, economic support to vulnerable families, social inclusion of people with disabilities, and other such areas? And furthermore, do social workers have the resources to

¹⁷ See, for example, Child Frontiers (2011), “Mapping and Assessing Child Protection Systems in West and Central Africa: A Five-Country Analysis Paper,” especially the section on human resources.

engage in these tasks? Advocacy and lobbying in countries like Nigeria and Ghana to pass the draft laws that will create the legislative framework for social work, providing social workers with mandates to act, also provide opportunities to spark discussion around these issues.

Given that the mandate for action remains quite indistinct in most countries of the WCA region, it is unlikely that pursuing standards for licensure—a strategy that countries in other regions of the world have been pursuing with vigor in recent years—would be the most fruitful strategy for professionalizing social work in the WCA region in the short term. Nevertheless, discussions about the educational and accreditation standards needed for social service workers at various levels will almost necessarily form a core component of these processes recommended to set clearer boundaries and goals for the practice of social work. Other areas in which national stakeholders will need to make explicit decisions include the relationship between government social workers and other workforce representatives, such as NGO and CBO workers and community leaders and in which instances each of these sets of actors has a mandate to act. The development of the National Child Welfare Policy in Sierra Leone, which makes explicit how government social welfare officers and community leaders are expected to interact and the scope of responsibility for each, might serve as an example for such processes in other countries.

Recommendation #2: Once the roles of various members and representatives of the broadly defined social service workforce have been clearly identified, it is recommended that a structured process of curricula reform occur in countries throughout the region. Curricula revision for initial and in-service training could then more explicitly address the necessary skills that social workers will need in each particular country. Put another way, social workers’ mandates and scopes of work should inform the curricula.

Well-defined curricula and academic processes will help to contribute to the professionalization of social work in WCA countries. Training programs, especially academic curricula, should aim to be grounded in the realities of the social work profession as it is practiced. Such “grounding” can be achieved through including practicing social workers on curricula development committees as is done by the NBTE in Nigeria and by the INFTS in Burkina Faso. In terms of pedagogy, curricula should move away from the traditional emphasis of education in the cognitive domain—which focuses on recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers—towards higher-order processes such as:

- Comprehension (translation, interpretation, extrapolation);
- Application (using new knowledge, solving problems in new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques, and rules);
- Analysis (analysis of elements, relationships, and organizational principles);
- Synthesis (compiling information in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions); and
- Evaluation (present and defend opinions by making judgments about information, validity or ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria).

The case of the INFTS’s ongoing curriculum reform in Burkina Faso is instructive. Each training level’s curriculum is reviewed systematically every five years; the process involves not only

senior managers within the directorate but involves a consultation process in which field-level social workers and international agencies whose knowledge of global trends can also be helpful. In the most recent review of the social work curriculum for level A training in Burkina Faso, for example, inputs came not only from field-level social workers, who shared that child migration was an increasingly difficult problem for them, but also from UNICEF, which suggested the inclusion of additional modules concerning people with disabilities.

As governments and universities lead curriculum reform processes, it will be important to pay special attention to culturally specific social welfare concerns and solutions. In Ghana, for example, despite a relatively recent process of the “indigenization” of the social work training curriculum at the School of Social Work, most professors indicated that both the theoretical concepts and the practice recommendations were relevant for the global North more so than for the Ghanaian context. Many training documents, for example, and especially those developed by NGOs automatically include something on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is a relevant framework from international law. Only a few training documents, however, even mentioned the ACRWC, and none mentioned the ECOWAS Child Protection Policy. In the same vein, very few training documents made explicit reference to extended kinship networks that comprise families in the WCA region. Social work practice, which depends so heavily on families, is especially sensitive to family iterations. In future work, therefore, it will be important to better understand cultural relevance related to social work training and education.

Recommendation #3: Governments and international agencies working across the WCA region should work collectively to streamline the disparate strands of training that are offered by NGOs and CBOs. Naturally, the content of training for NGO and CBO workers should—as should training for government social workers—emanate from more clearly delineated roles, highlighting again the importance of the processes discussed in the first recommendation above. The issue-based trainings that NGOs and CBOs conduct often skip basic social work skills to provide highly specialized training for social service workers who have not yet received the “basics,” creating a dangerous imbalance. In addition, in some cases, independent trainings offered by particular NGOs may not be in line with recognized national or international child protection standards, suggesting that harmonization is needed in order to avoid practitioners being trained in areas that conflict with recognized standards of practice.

The consultation processes described above should also create spaces in which NGO and CBO workers who contribute to the social service landscape can express their self-identified training needs. Many workers consulted throughout the course of this study indicated that the priorities and topics of such trainings emanated from the international community not from their expressed needs, an ironic assertion given that these workers are, among the many layers of workforce workers in the region, the closest to the populations being served and supported and the most in contact with vulnerable children and families. In addition to basic social work principles and training, many workers suggested that they would like support in organizational management and development, key factors for the development of a strong and sustainable civil society to buttress governmental social workforces in countries throughout the region.

One agency that is particularly well positioned to support governments throughout a process to create a basic framework for NGO and CBO training is ISS, given the recent opening of its West Africa regional office and its birds' eye view of social work training for both government and non-government social service workforce workers throughout the region. Many actors also look to UNICEF for ongoing support.

Recommendation #4: There is also a great need to develop social work education capacity.

Few of those teaching social workers (e.g., instructors, teachers, professors) have advanced social work degrees themselves. To give one example, in Nigeria's University of Lagos, no social work instructors actually have an MSW. In both Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, the full teachers typically have the same level of education as the students whom they are teaching (although they may have more years of experience). As a result, as these training institutes bring in part-time professors from nearby universities, students are often learning more about disciplines like sociology or psychology that, however useful, are not identical to social work theories and methods. While multi-disciplinarity and sharing of knowledge from other disciplines is important, these features should not come at the expense of important social work theories, approaches, and methods.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the INFS is attempting to close this gap by providing on-site MSW education for 23 of its full-time social work teachers, offered in partnership with the *Université Senghor* of Alexandria, Egypt, whose professors have been contracted to come to Côte d'Ivoire periodically throughout the year to offer courses. While this temporary measure is much appreciated by the teachers and students at the INFS, **longer-term solutions that ensure that the faculty of the training institutes have sufficient theoretical, practical, and pedagogical training are needed in countries throughout the region.**

Recommendation #5: Potential partnerships remain an area for further exploration as this study did not reveal any structured, equitable, and truly mutually beneficial partnerships between, for example, schools of social work in the global North and schools of social work in the WCA region. To give an example, although Burkina Faso's INFTS has specific partnerships with two French universities and the Japanese Development Cooperation, these partnerships entail students and teachers from those entities coming to Burkina Faso to teach courses or, in the case of students, to undertake fieldwork related to their studies. Two French universities ended partnerships with the INFS in Côte d'Ivoire during the conflict era there. On the other hand, in Senegal, ENTSS noting positive partnerships with universities in Canada (Université Laval à Québec, Université Laurentienne de Sudbury, and Université de Montréal) and France (Institut de Travail Éducation et Social à Brest and Institut de Formation en Travail Social à Grenoble). Therefore, **a process to identify schools of social work interested in partnering with the various social work training institutes and universities throughout the WCA region—and to do so in a way that respects cultural norms and the need for locally relevant training—is much needed.** Though it is not clear how equitable these partnerships are and if they mainly serve the interests of the Global North institutions. Therefore, these partnerships between institutes in WCA and universities in the Global North must be cultivated and supported to ensure that it is a beneficial exchange for both parties. Furthermore, the presence of ISS's new

regional office in Burkina Faso should be capitalized upon, and discussions with organizations like Building Professional Social Work should also be explored. Finally, that some professors of social work are pursuing their PhDs in social work in countries like France, Canada, and the United States should be explored as inroads.

Action Steps

Based on the above recommendations, the following action steps are recommended:

1. Conversations with stakeholders during field visits indicated that they are very keen to learn from the successes and challenges of other WCA countries. Given the large number of WCA countries in this study that belong to ECOWAS (e.g., Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone), it is recommended that **ECOWAS, in collaboration with other actors, support a regional guidance workshop** resulting in the development of a region-wide network where stakeholders from each of these countries exchange experiences and develop an agenda to strengthening the social service workforce within their countries. This workshop and resulting network would be well placed to facilitate the sharing of Africa-specific social work curricula (for example, from Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal), so as not to continuously “reinvent the wheel.”
2. Based on the regional guidance from the ECOWAS-sponsored workshop (see Action Step 1 above), **national social service policymakers in each country should clarify the definition, roles, and responsibilities of social work specific to their context.** These country-specific initiatives should be accompanied by UNICEF country offices. Working closely with the federal government, each UNICEF country office should support the development of a Technical Working Group, including key stakeholders from every level that engages in social work training (academic, NGO, CBO) within each country to provide support and guidance to the development of definitions, roles and responsibilities of social workers. Even though this research revealed that social workers across countries were often frustrated with the means available to them to undertake their work, many had a clear sense of mission and were able to specifically describe their daily tasks. This strength should therefore be capitalized upon in the initiatives to develop country-specific definitions, roles and responsibilities of social work.
3. **Based on the country-specific discussions around definition, roles and responsibilities of social work (see Action Step 2 above), ISS (supported by the UNICEF WCAR office) should lead a second, region-wide workshop to support countries' development of core competencies related to social workers with support from other key stakeholders.**
4. With a mandate to promote social work, best practice models, and the facilitation of international cooperation, **the IASSW (with support from IFSW and CSWE) should develop global guidelines for equitable exchange between social work training institutes and organizations in the WCA region and social work institutions in the Global North to encourage more responsible partnerships.** These guidelines should

move beyond placements for students and field trips for visiting professors towards real engagement between institutions where *both* sides benefit.

5. With the support of the UNICEF WCA office, **the global Child Protection Working Group should be engaged to develop a system of information sharing with social work training institutes and organizations in the WCA region.** Multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), as well as academic papers, gray literature, and other documents that address current child protection issues relevant to social work should be shared in order to ensure that social workers have the latest national, regional, and global research. The CPWG could fulfill this task through an electronic newsletter or by creating brief video lectures on specific child protection issues that can be shared cross-culturally in classrooms.
6. Finally, **the UNICEF WCA office should engage independent researchers to conduct more detailed studies to determine reliable numbers of how many social workers, paraprofessional social workers, and natural helpers exist in each country, as well as the number and types of social service workers required for the social service system to effectively function.**

VII. Concluding Remarks

If the field is to expand the social service workforce in the WCA region and develop country-specific definitions, roles, and responsibilities of social work practice, such a movement will require that mechanisms be established or strengthened to support the social workers (especially paraprofessional social workers) who serve at the heart of the social welfare, child protection, and family welfare systems. Any efforts to strengthen the social service workforce will need to be accompanied by advocacy with national governments to create better working conditions for the social workers, who receive extremely low salaries (in Côte d'Ivoire, social workers made approximately one third the salary of pre-school teachers) and whose work is hampered by the lack of even the most minimal of operating budgets. Advocacy for additional funding for social workers' training and momentum for students pursuing a social work degree represent opportunities to strengthen social work practice, including as it relates to child protection. Such advocacy will also need to extend beyond national governments to bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies such as the World Bank and others, whose policies in Ghana, for example, have mandated a hiring freeze on all government employees, including social workers. As a result of these policies, available jobs for trained social workers in Ghana have become significantly limited, and many units of the Department of Social Welfare have become short-staffed, yet unable to replenish their workforce.

Most of the countries analyzed demonstrated a severely low number of social workers, as low as one social worker for every 188,000 people in Niger. (The exceptions are Burkina Faso, Benin, and Nigeria, where ratios are much lower, indicating far more social workers per capita.) Beyond the rudimentary analysis of this study, which builds upon the mapping processes in several countries in 2011, more sophisticated efforts should be made to determine the numbers of social service workers needed in each country, akin to the ratios of doctors to population that prevail in the health sector.¹⁸ As the social service system in each country is distinct, more in-depth analyses should also examine what human resources would be required for such a system to effectively function. This information would provide policymakers with a minimal idea of the resources needed to create a social service workforce and help those hoping to strengthen the social work workforce to better understand what kind of trainings, certifications, or diplomas need to be developed to suit the demand. The ability to conduct cost-benefit analyses seems a distant reality and will surely need to be situated in broader social welfare and protection systems mapping processes; nonetheless, short-term steps to understand how many social work administrators, social workers, and NGO and CBO workers required in order to provide basic social services are feasible.

All of these steps—costing, performing cost-benefit analyses, advocating for additional resources for the social service workforce, and so forth—can only happen after the development of clearer visions about the role that social service workers at various levels are expected to play in national development as described in recommendation #1 above. That crucial step of collectively clarifying social service workers' *raison d'être* both at the country level and throughout the WCA region—and articulating it clearly from the community to the international levels—must

¹⁸ See footnote number 2.

come first if the multi-step journey to strengthening the social service workforce in the West and Central Africa region is to begin.

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Appendix I: Tools for Field-Level Data Collection

Tool 1: Semi-structured interview questionnaire

Introduction and Informed Consent

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. We are very interested to hear your valuable opinion on social work education and training and how this relates to child protection in Nigeria. The purpose of this research is to conduct a regional mapping of universities and social work institutions in West and Central Africa who are engaged in formal and non-formal education of social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGO practitioners. The study aims to contribute to UNICEF's overall strategy to support the strengthening of child protection systems in the region.

[Review informed consent form.]

General

Tell me about social work (formal and informal) in [your country].

Who does this work (social workers, paraprofessionals, NGOs) in [your country]?

How many practicing social workers are there (social workers, paraprofessionals, NGOs) in [your country]? And where do they work (i.e. are some areas better served than others)?

How are these [social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGOs practitioners] trained (formally and non-formally) in child protection?

- What kind of initial training do they receive and in-service/continuing education?

What are the foundations of the training programs that are offered?

- Is there a theoretical approach that [your institute] adheres to (some examples may include: child development theories, resilience theory, empowerment theory, strengths-based perspectives, social systems, crisis intervention, ecological theory, life model systems approach, person-centered, psychosocial theory, problem-solving, social planning, structural, task-centred models)?

How long are the training programs that are offered?

What are the qualifications and/or accreditation that are available in your country/through your University/Institute?

What are the strengths and challenges of these training programs?

How many Social Workers are trained each year in your institute? Do you have figures for 2010, 2011, 2012?

Research

Are [research/monitoring and evaluation/research methods] integrated into training programs? If so, how?

Are [social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGOs practitioners] equipped with basic knowledge of research methods in order to conduct their own research and/or evaluations on child protection issues and programs? If so, how?

Policy

How do [social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGOs practitioners] learn about child protection policies and legislation?

How do training programs prepare [social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGOs practitioners] to [engage with/influence] policy?

How do training programs prepare [social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGOs practitioners] to [implement/enact] policy/legislation?

Practice

Is practice integrated into social work training (e.g., internships/practicums)?

- If so, do these activities take place within [your country] or outside its borders?

Explain how the current training programs are or are not relevant and/or applicable to the daily work of [social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGOs practitioners] who work with children and families in your country?

Once done with training, how do these professionals keep their skills fresh?

Closing Questions

Is there anything you would like to add that we haven't spoken about today?

Do you have any questions for me?

Tool 2: Introduction and Informed Consent

NAME: I am [name] from [town]. I am working on behalf of the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, a research group that works to improve the protection and well-being of children around the world. This study is supported by the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office.

STUDY PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to conduct a regional mapping of universities and social work institutions in West and Central Africa who are engaged in formal and non-formal education of social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGO practitioners. Findings from the study will contribute to UNICEF's overall strategy to support the strengthening of child protection systems in the region..

NO MATERIAL BENEFITS: The study findings will directly inform UNICEF's overall strategy to support the strengthening of child protection systems in the region. There are no direct material benefits to individuals participating in this research.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS: I will ask you questions about the state of social work training as related to child protection. If you are a social worker or social work student, I will ask you questions about your social work training and your current experiences as a social worker.

CAN SKIP QUESTIONS OR STOP ANYTIME: You can decide not to participate in the interview, or you can tell us when a question makes you uncomfortable and we will skip that question. There is no need to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. If you like, you can end the interview at any time and this will not affect any assistance you get from any organisation.

CONFIDENTIAL: All your answers will be kept private and confidential, and the only people that will have access to this information are the researchers for this study. We will not write your names anywhere. When we finish this research, we will write a report, which will be given to UNICEF and others who are interested in strengthening the social service workforce in Nigeria, but no names will be included.

CONTACT: If you have any questions, or if problems arise, you may contact **Susan Garland** at the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity: info@columbiagroupforchildren.com

May we have your permission to ask these questions, and are you willing to participate? **Yes/ No**

If respondent DECLINES TO PARTICIPATE: Why? _____

If respondent agrees to complete questionnaire, the interviewer should sign below and continue.

I confirm I have given all the information above to the respondent, and she/ he has agreed to participate.

Signature of interviewer:

Tool 3: Group Discussion Guide for Social Work Students

Introduction and Informed Consent

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. We are very interested to hear your valuable opinion on social work education and training and how this relates to child protection in Nigeria. The purpose of this research is to conduct a regional mapping of universities and social work institutions in West and Central Africa who are engaged in formal and non-formal education of social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGO practitioners. The study aims to contribute to UNICEF's overall strategy to support the strengthening of child protection systems in the region.

[Review informed consent form.]

General Questions

What events led up to you enrolling in a social work degree program?

- Do you have previous social work experience?

Tell me about the type of social work education you are receiving (e.g., length of program, types of classes, ending degree etc.).

What are the strengths and challenges of this program?

- What challenges have you encountered during your enrolment in the program (e.g., funding, timeline, workload, etc.)?

Are you training in child protection issues and if so, how?

Theory Questions

What kind of social work theories do you learn in your program? Is there a particular theoretical approach that your educational institution adheres to?

How are these theories relevant to training in child protection?

Research Questions

Are research or monitoring and evaluation methods integrated into your training programs? If so, how?

Do you feel equipped with the basic knowledge of research methods in order to conduct your own research and/or evaluation on child protection issues and programs?

- If so, how?
- If not, what would you need to learn in order to conduct research and/or evaluation?

Policy Questions

What child protection policies and legislation do you learn about in your program? How do you learn about these policies and legislation?

Has your social work training prepared you to engage with and influence policy?

- If so, how?
- If not, how do you think you could be better prepared?

Practice Questions

Is practice integrated into social work training? For example, do you have to complete an internship/practicum/stage?

- If so, where do these activities take place?

Do you think that your current training program is relevant and/or applicable to the daily work of social workers who work with children and families in Nigeria?

- If so, how?
- If not, how could the training be improved?

Closing Questions

What do you hope to do once you complete your social work degree?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me that we did not get a chance to speak about?

Do you have any questions for me?

Tool 4: Group Discussion Guide for Government Social Workers

Introduction and Informed Consent

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. We are very interested to hear your valuable opinion on social work education and training and how this relates to child protection in Nigeria. The purpose of this research is to conduct a regional mapping of universities and social work institutions in West and Central Africa who are engaged in formal and non-formal education of social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGO practitioners. The study aims to contribute to UNICEF's overall strategy to support the strengthening of child protection systems in the region.

[Review informed consent form.]

General Questions

Tell me about the type of social work that you practice?

Tell me about the type of social work education you received (e.g., length of program, types of classes, ending degree etc.).

Were you trained in child protection issues and if so, how?

Do you currently engage in any continuing education or additional training programs?

- If so, please describe these programs (length, type of training, topic, who conducts the training).
- If not, what are the reasons for not participating in any additional trainings (time, availability, relevance, etc.)?
- What kind of additional training do you feel you would like to participate in?

Theory Questions

What kind of social work theories did you learn in your program? Was there a particular theoretical approach that your educational institution adheres to?

Have you found these theories to be relevant to your work in child protection? Please explain.

Research Questions

Were research or monitoring and evaluation methods integrated into your training program? If so, how?

Did your education/training equip you with the basic knowledge of research methods in order to conduct your own research and/or evaluation on child protection issues and programs?

- If so, how?
- If not, what would you need to learn in order to conduct research and/or evaluation?

Policy Questions

What child protection policies and legislation did you learn about in your training? How do you learn about these policies and legislation?

Did your social work training prepared you to engage with and influence policy in your current role as a social worker?

- If so, how?
- If not, how do you think you could be better prepared?

Practice Questions

Was practice integrated into social work training? For example, did you have to complete an internship/practicum/stage?

- If so, where do these activities take place?

Do you feel that your social work training prepared you for your current role as a social worker?

- If so, how?
- If not, how could it have been improved?

Closing Questions

What do you hope to do once you complete your social work degree?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me that we did not get a chance to speak about?

Do you have any questions for me?

Tool 5: Group Discussion Guide for NGO and CBO Social Workers

Introduction and Informed Consent

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. We are very interested to hear your valuable opinion on social work education and training and how this relates to child protection in Nigeria. The purpose of this research is to conduct a regional mapping of universities and social work institutions in West and Central Africa who are engaged in formal and non-formal education of social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGO practitioners. The study aims to contribute to UNICEF's overall strategy to support the strengthening of child protection systems in the region.

[Review informed consent form.]

General Questions

Tell me about the type of social work that you practice?

Tell me about the type of social work education you received (e.g., length of program, types of classes, ending degree etc.).

Were you trained in child protection issues and if so, how?

Do you currently engage in any continuing education or additional training programs?

- If so, please describe these programs (length, type of training, topic, who conducts the training).
- If not, what are the reasons for not participating in any additional trainings (time, availability, relevance, etc.)?
- What kind of additional training do you feel you would like to participate in?

Theory Questions

What kind of social work theories did you learn in your program? Was there a particular theoretical approach that your educational institution adheres to?

Have you found these theories to be relevant to your work in child protection? Please explain.

Research Questions

Were research or monitoring and evaluation methods integrated into your training program? If so, how?

Did your education/training equip you with the basic knowledge of research methods in order to conduct your own research and/or evaluation on child protection issues and programs?

- If so, how?
- If not, what would you need to learn in order to conduct research and/or evaluation?

Policy Questions

What child protection policies and legislation did you learn about in your training? How do you learn about these policies and legislation?

Did your social work training prepared you to engage with and influence policy in your current role as a social worker?

- If so, how?
- If not, how do you think you could be better prepared?

Practice Questions

Was practice integrated into social work training? For example, did you have to complete an internship/practicum/stage?

- If so, where do these activities take place?

Do you feel that your social work training prepared you for your current role as a social worker?

- If so, how?
- If not, how could it have been improved?

Closing Questions

What do you hope to do once you complete your social work degree?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me that we did not get a chance to speak about?

Do you have any questions for me?

Tool 6: Case Story Interview Guide

Adapted from Child Frontiers (2010).

Introduction and Informed Consent

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. We are very interested to hear your valuable opinion on social work education and training and how this relates to child protection in Nigeria. The purpose of this research is to conduct a regional mapping of universities and social work institutions in West and Central Africa who are engaged in formal and non-formal education of social workers, paraprofessionals, and NGO practitioners. The study aims to contribute to UNICEF's overall strategy to support the strengthening of child protection systems in the region.

[Review informed consent form.]

Q: Without naming any names, please describe step by step a recent child protection case that you managed.

Ensure that the respondent includes the following details:

- *How the respondent came into contact with the child and/or family;*
- *The people or services to whom the respondent referred the child and/or family;*
- *Where the child is today and whether or not the respondent is still in contact.*

At this point, the note-taker should create a step-by-step outline of the case management process.

When the respondent has finished the story, please repeat the story back to him or her to ensure that you have not missed any details and that you have captured all of the steps.

For each step of the process, ask the following questions:

- **Q: Who decided that this would be the action taken? Were there other options available? If so, why was this specific option chosen?**
- **Q: Do you remember any part of your training—either at school or in workshops—that prepared you to make this decision?**
 - **If so, what?**
- **Q: Do you think the child was satisfied or dissatisfied with the action taken at this point? If so, how do you know?**

Once you have asked these questions for each of the steps, ask the respondent if there is anything he/she would like to add, or if he/she has any questions for you.

Appendix II: Disaggregation of study respondents by country, research activity, sex and agency

Country	# of SSIs	Description	# of GDs	Description
Burkina Faso	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One (1) female government social worker from <i>Services Sociaux d'Arrondissement - Bôgôdôgô</i> - One (1) male NGO worker from <i>ABEPAM</i> - One (1) male government social worker from <i>Direction Provinciale du MASSN – Gaoua</i> - One (1) woman (<i>Directrice des Etudes et des Stages</i>) from <i>Direction Générale de l'INFTS</i> - Two (2) men from <i>Service Social International</i> 	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eight (8) men from the management team at <i>Ecole des Cadres Supérieurs de l'INFTS</i> - Three (3) teachers from the school : two (2) men and one (1) woman at <i>Ecole des Cadres Supérieurs de l'INFTS</i> - Nine (9) students : eight (8) men and one (1) woman; three students from each of the three years offered at <i>Ecole des Cadres Supérieurs de l'INFTS</i> - Nine (9) government social workers: five (5) men and four (4) women at <i>Services Sociaux d'Arrondissement - Bôgôdôgô</i> - Eleven (11) NGO/CBO workers: six (6) men and five (5) women from NGOs and CBOs of Ouagadougou - Seven (7) government social workers : six (6) men and one (1) woman from <i>Direction Provinciale du MASSN - Gaoua</i> - Five (5) people from the management team: four (4) men and one (1) woman from <i>Ecole des Cadres Moyens – INFTS</i> - Five (5) male teachers from the school from <i>Ecole des Cadres Moyens – INFTS</i> - Ten (10) students : seven (7) men and three (3) women from <i>Ecole des Cadres Moyens – INFTS</i>
Côte d'Ivoire	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One (1) woman (Child Protection Chief) from <i>UNICEF</i> - One (1) man (Director) from <i>Institut National de Formation Social</i> 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Six (6) members of the school management : one (1) woman and five (5) men from <i>Institut National de Formation Social</i> - Three (3) teachers from the school : one (1) woman

Country	# of SSIs	Description	# of GDs	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One (1) man (Internship Director) from <i>Institut National de Formation Social</i> - One (1) female government social worker from <i>Centre Social de Yopougon</i> - One (1) male association worker from the local association of Yopougon - One (1) female NGO worker from <i>AVSI</i> - One (1) female NGO worker from <i>Save the Children</i> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and two (2) men from <i>Institut National de Formation Social</i> - Nine (9) students : four (4) women and five (5) men in the “social assistance” track at <i>Institut National de Formation Social</i> - Ten (10) students : four (4) women and six (6) men from <i>Institut National de Formation Social</i> - Nine (9) government social workers : five (5) women and four (4) men from <i>Centre Social de Yopougon</i> - Eight (8) people: three (3) women and five (5) men from diverse NGOs and associations in Yopougon
Ghana	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three (3) individuals (2 male program directors, one female social worker) from <i>Adventist Relief and Development Agency (ADRA)</i> - One (1) male (Child Protection and Advocacy Coordinator) from <i>World Vision Ghana</i> - Two (2) male senior program staff from <i>PLAN Ghana</i> - One (1) male (Director) from the <i>Center for Development Initiatives</i> - One (1) male (Director) from <i>Right to Be Free</i> - One (1) male (Focal Point for Foster-Care and Adoption/International Cases) from the <i>Department of Social Welfare</i> - One (1) female (Child Protection Chief) from <i>UNICEF</i> - One (1) female (Director) of the <i>Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection</i> - One (1) male (Principal) from the <i>School of</i> 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four (4) individuals (2 male, 2 female) from the <i>Child Protection Advisory Committee</i> - Five (5) Social Work students (2 male, 3 female) from the <i>University of Ghana</i> - Four (4) female Social Work professors from the <i>University of Ghana</i> - Six (6) social workers (2 male, 4 female) from the <i>Shelter for Abused Children</i> - Two (2) male social workers from the <i>Social Welfare Unit at Police Hospital/Ghana Police Service</i>

Country	# of SSI's	Description	# of GDs	Description
		<p><i>Social Work (sponsored by the Department of Social Welfare)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One (1) female (Director) from the <i>Shelter for Abused Children</i> - One (1) male (<i>National Family Based Care Advisor</i>) from SOS Children's Villages Ghana - One (1) male (Director) from the <i>Social Welfare Unit at Police Hospital/Ghana Police Service</i> 		
Nigeria	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One (1) female international social work education consultant, Abuja - One (1) female program manager for an NGO working in child protection, Abuja - One (1) female program manager for an NGO working in child protection, Kaduna - One (1) female head of an international child protection agency, Abuja - One (1) male university professor and child rights advocate, Enugu - One (1) male director of an NGO that provides social work education, Enugu - One (1) male head of a social work technical school, Enugu - One (1) male director of university-level social work program, Enugu - One (1) female government social worker, Abuja - One (1) female and one (1) male leader of national social work association, Abuja 	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fourteen (14) para-social workers (6 male and 8 female) in Kaduna - Twenty-five (25) government social workers (20 male and 5 female) in Kaduna - Ten (10) social work students (7 male and 3 female) in Kaduna: - Five (5) social work instructors (3 male and 2 female) in Kaduna - Three (3) recent social work graduates (2 male and 1 female) in Enugu - Three (3) social work instructors (2 male and 1 female) in Nsukka - Eight (8) social work students (5 male and 3 female) in Nsukka

Country	# of SSIs	Description	# of GDs	Description
		- One (1) female paraprofessional social worker working with a non-governmental child protection agency, Enugu - one (1) female government social worker working for the federal Ministry in Abuja		
TOTAL	37	18 women and 22 men (two SSIs, one in Burkina Faso and one in Ghana, were joined by more than one person)	27	70 women and 131 men